

AMERICAN POETS

1630-1930



A M E R I C A N P O E T S

1630-1930

EDITED

BY

MARK VAN DOREN

BOSTON

1932

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY



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PREFACE

THE title of this book is intended to be taken quite literally. My aim was not to compile a work of reference wherein almost any American poem might be found, nor was it to represent every American poet who has had a name. The bulk of the country's verse is of course enormous, and the list of its poets is endless. My aim was rather to leave as many poets out as I conscientiously could, on the theory that those who remained would then appear to possess a genuine distinction, and could be represented by as many pieces as were necessary to prove their quality. The anthology which exhibits the work of five hundred poets has its uses, and may indeed be indispensable; but it is rarely that a reader can find in such a volume that quantity of a poet's work which he needs in order to have knowledge of the poet. I have restricted myself to fifty-seven names, in the belief that even so few may speak after all most perfectly for the better part of American poetry over three centuries.

The table of contents, which is arranged chronologically, will disclose the fact that certain periods have not been represented at all, and that among those which have there is an apparent absence of proportion. The seventeenth century, for instance, contributes only one name, Anne Bradstreet, and the eighteenth century only two, Philip Freneau and Joel Barlow. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are still more curiously treated. For of the fifty-four remaining names thirty-four belong to poets who have done most or all of their work in the present century — which, since only a third of it has so far passed, would seem therefore to be about five times as important as its predecessor.

The answer is that I have represented not periods but poets, and that I have taken them wherever I thought I found them, no matter how far apart or how close together they lived. Anne Bradstreet, the year of whose coming to America fixes the first date in my title, was the only poet of her century in whom, it seemed to me, a prolonged interest could now be felt. So for the next century, whose numerous elegists and satirists and celebrators

of philosophic solitude, not to speak of its epic poets, have in the true sense failed to survive. Their work may have its curious or historical interest, but to the extent that it was not alive for me it called for exclusion here. Barlow's poem on hasty pudding seemed to me immeasurably more important, because more readable, than any or all of the longer poems on which he spent so much time; and Freneau, who to be sure runs over into the next century, could not be left out on any account, since he was more than sincere, which many of his contemporaries were. He was a poet.

Now I have not the slightest doubt that in another fifty years I should appear, if I were consulted then at all, to have been unjust in the proportions I established between this century and the last one. Not, perhaps, that I should be blamed for including so few poets from the nineteenth century, but that I should seem to have acted strangely in admitting so many from our own. To this future criticism there can be no answer now. Notoriously it is difficult to be calm about one's contemporaries, or to judge them with anything like that certainty which is almost instinctive when one explores the performances of the past. Poets of another age, who seemed to their first readers so different from one another as to make classification and selection impossible, come in time to look and sound very much alike. The few who keep their difference are the ones we admire, and this difference, we think, is easy to see. It was not so easy then, as in the present decade it is not so easy to see that when we boast about the remarkable variety exhibited by our poets, and labor to distinguish dozens or hundreds of them from one another, we are merely acting out the old tale. I confess I share the illusion, if illusion it is, that American poetry between 1910 and 1930 has been more interesting than it was between 1630, say, and 1830; and, if a similar comparison cannot be made at the expense of the period between 1830 and 1910, that at any rate the list of modern names still deserves to be as long as I have made it. At the same time I find it possible to believe that a day will come when many of the names towards the end of my list will be as obscure as certain names which now can be picked at random from Rufus Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America"—St. John Honeywood, for instance, or Levi Frisbie, or Grenville Mellen, or Jedediah Huntington. Which ones these are, however, I have no way of telling, just as I have no way of telling which names among those I have left out it has been my damnation to ignore.

My selections from the nineteenth century I shall not presume to defend either by appealing to reason or by invoking a standard

of judgment. I have less and less confidence in those two authorities. An anthologist, once he has been foolish enough to set out, must go his own way. Not, I trust, that my way is especially strange. The main road through this poetry is still the best one to take, and I have followed it wherever I could. But I have found some portions of it more pleasant going than many travellers have found them, and I have hurried over other portions without trying to conceal my haste. There is so much of Emerson here, for instance, because I like him so much; 'at his best I think him the peer of almost any English poet. So with Emily Dickinson; and so, though in lesser degree, with Whitman, whose message — which he depended on — has lost much of its interest, while his art, whenever it appears at all, appears now the more clearly because it can be seen in its simplicity. Among the other standard poets of the century I have found Bryant and Whittier still clear and sure, though scarcely strong; and I have taken pains to show how melodious a virtuoso Longfellow could be in those relatively few poems in which he somehow refrained from relaxing into the sentiment so natural to him. Holmes and Lowell boiled down, I thought, to very little, though in the case of Holmes that little still seems to me perfect of its kind. For the rest, Thoreau struck me as singularly good after fifteen years during which I had not reread his verse, and I hope I have not done him too much justice by including so many of his somewhat angular but certainly very accurate exercises in the metaphysical mode. Chivers is here, not merely because he is being discussed and rediscovered these days, but because there was a strength in his wildness, a method in his experiment, which I could not put out of mind. So Boker's sonnets seemed to me too vigorous to leave in their obscurity.

Among the poets of the present century there will appear to be several gross instances of disproportion. Some of these are only apparent, as when, for instance, the table of contents fails to reveal that the space devoted to George Edward Woodberry and William Ellery Leonard is actually considerable. And in general I must warn the reader against supposing that the number of pages occupied by any poet is in itself an indication of the importance I attribute to him. Some of these instances, however, are real; and my reason was no other than the law of copyright, which in the cases of William Vaughn Moody, Amy Lowell, Anna Hempstead Branch, Wallace Stevens, Elinor Wylie, T. S. Eliot, and Archibald MacLeish prevented me from securing permission to reprint as many poems as seemed necessary or desirable.

Edgar Lee Masters had to be altogether excluded for the same reason.

In so far as it was possible I have arranged the poems of each author in the order of their composition, and usually I have endeavored to represent him in the various stages of his progress, though whenever there seemed to be no virtue in this principle I abandoned it. I did not include, for example, any of the insignificant poems which Timrod wrote before the Civil War woke him up; I found John Gould Fletcher so interesting in his post-Imagist period that I thought it worth while to neglect the "Symphonies" by which he is regularly represented in anthologies; so with Maxwell Bodenheim, whose later poems seem to me immeasurably his best; and so in the opposite way with Vachel Lindsay.

Whenever I could I have used long poems, and I could have used more if I had been willing to shorten them. I did, I confess, abridge the third part of William Ellery Leonard's "Two Lives"; I cut six incredibly bad stanzas out of Chivers's "Avalon," gave only the beginning of "The Chaplet of Cypress," and, failing to find the whole of "Little Boy Blue" from which Foster Damon in his biography of Chivers has quoted a fragment, let it go with that fragment; and I extracted from Conrad Aiken's "Senlin" the morning and evening songs, one of which has by common usage been granted an independent existence. No other extracts or abridgments will, I think, be found.

I hope that certain fashionable poets of other days — Drake, Halleck, Willis, the Cary sisters, and Mrs. Sigourney — will not be missed; that it will not seem fatal for me to have neglected whole groups and schools like those of Hartford and Manhattan; and that no reader will mind my having assumed him capable of looking up the authors of single famous poems — Julia Ward Howe, Theodore O'Hara, James Ryder Randall — in the familiar collections which contain them.

For, to repeat, I have preferred to represent American poetry only as it has been written by poets. Now in the end I am convinced that there have been a good many of them; and that they have produced a body of beautiful and extraordinary work.

MARK VAN DOREN

New York

1932

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AMERICAN POETS

1630-1930

Anne Bradstreet [1612-1672]

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

In secret place where once I stood,
Close by the banks of lacrym flood,
I heard two sisters reason on
Things that are past and things to come.
One Flesh was called, who had her eye
On worldly wealth and vanity ;
The other Spirit, who did rear
Her thoughts unto a higher sphere.
"Sister," quoth Flesh, "what livest thou on —
Nothing but meditation ?
Doth contemplation feed thee, so
Regardlessly to let earth go ?
Can speculation satisfy
Notion without reality ?
Dost dream of things beyond the moon,
And dost thou hope to dwell there soon ?
Hast treasures there laid up in store
That all in the world thou countest poor ?
Art fancy sick, or turned a sot,
To catch at shadows which are not ?
Come, come, I'll show unto thy sense
Industry hath its recompense.
What canst desire but thou mayst see
True substance in variety ?
Dost honor like ? Acquire the same,
As some to their immortal fame,
And trophies to thy name erect
Which wearing time shall ne'er deject.
For riches dost thou long full sore ?
Behold enough of precious store ;
Earth hath more silver, pearls, and gold
Than eyes can see or hands can hold.
Affectest thou pleasure ? Take thy fill ;
Earth hath enough of what you will.
Then let not go what thou mayst find
For things unknown, only in mind."

Spirit

"Be still, thou unregenerate part ;
Disturb no more my settled heart,
For I have vowed, and so will do,
Thee as a foe still to pursue,
And combat with thee will and must
Until I see thee laid in the dust.
Sisters we are, yea, twins we be,
Yet deadly feud 'twixt thee and me ;
For from one father are we not.
Thou by old Adam was begot,
But my arise is from above,
Whence my dear Father I do love.
Thou speakest me fair, but hatest me sore ;
Thy flattering shows I'll trust no more.
How oft thy slave hast thou me made
When I believed what thou hast said,
And never had more cause of woe
Than when I did what thou bad'st do.
I'll stop mine ears at these thy charms,
And count them for my deadly harms.
Thy sinful pleasures I do hate,
Thy riches are to me no bait,
Thine honors do nor will I love,
For my ambition lies above.
My greatest honor it shall be
When I am victor over thee,
And triumph shall, with laurel head,
When thou my captive shalt be led.
How I do live thou needst not scoff,
For I have meat thou knowst not of :
The hidden manna I do eat,
The word of life it is my meat.
My thoughts do yield me more content
Than can thy hours in pleasure spent.
Nor are they shadows which I catch,
Nor fancies vain at which I snatch,
But reach at things that are so high
Beyond thy dull capacity.
Eternal substance I do see,
With which enrichéd I would be ;
Mine eye doth pierce the heavens, and see
What is invisible to thee.
My garments are not silk or gold,
Nor such like trash which earth doth hold,

But royal robes I shall have on,
 More glorious than the glistering sun.
 My crown not diamonds, pearls, and gold,
 But such as angels' heads enfold.
 The city where I hope to dwell
 There's none on earth can parallel :
 The stately walls, both high and strong,
 Are made of precious jasper stone ;
 The gates of pearl both rich and clear,
 And angels are for porters there ;
 The streets thereof transparent gold,
 Such as no eye did e'er behold ;
 A crystal river there doth run,
 Which doth proceed from the Lamb's throne ;
 Of life there are the waters sure,
 Which shall remain for ever pure ;
 Of sun or moon they have no need,
 For glory doth from God proceed —
 No candle there, nor yet torch-light,
 For there shall be no darksome night.
 From sickness and infirmity
 For evermore they shall be free,
 Nor withering age shall e'er come there,
 But beauty shall be bright and clear.
 This city pure is not for thee,
 For things unclean there shall not be.
 If I of Heaven may have my fill,
 Take thou the world, and all that will."

CONTEMPLATIONS

Some time now past in the Autumnal Tide,
 When *Phœbus* wanted but one hour to bed,
 The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride,
 Were gilded o're by his rich golden head ;
 Their leaves & fruits seem'd painted, but was true
 Of green, of red, of yellow, mixed hew ;
 Rapt were my sences at this delectable view.

I wist not what to wish ; "yet sure," thought I,
 "If so much excellence abide below,
 How excellent is he that dwells on high,
 Whose power and beauty by his works we know !
 Sure he is goodness, wisdome, glory, light,
 That hath this under-world so richly dight."
 More Heaven then Earth was here, no winter & no night.

Then on a stately Oak I cast mine Eye,
 Whose ruffling top the Clouds seem'd to aspire :
 "How long since thou wast in thine Infancy ?
 Thy strength and stature, more thy years admire.
 Hath hundred winters past since thou wast born,
 Or thousand since thou brakest thy shell of horn ?
 If so, all these as nought Eternity doth scorn."

Then higher on the glistening Sun I gaz'd,
 Whose beams was shaded by the leavie Tree.
 The more I look'd the more I grew amaz'd,
 And softly said : "What glory's like to thee,
 Soul of this world, this Universes Eye ?
 No wonder some made thee a Deity :
 Had I not better known, alas, the same had I.

"Thou as a Bridegroom from thy Chamber rushes,
 And as a strong man joyes to run a race ;
 The morn doth usher thee with smiles & blushes,
 The Earth reflects her glances in thy face ;
 Birds, insects, Animals, with Vegetative,
 Thy heart from death and dulness doth revive,
 And in the darksome womb of fruitful nature dive.

"Thy swift Annual and diurnal Course,
 Thy daily streight and yearly oblique path,
 Thy pleasing fervor and thy scorching force,
 All mortals here the feeling knowledge hath.
 Thy presence makes it day, thy absence night ;
 Quaternal Seasons caused by thy might.
 Hail, Creature full of sweetness, beauty, & delight !

"Art thou so full of glory that no Eye
 Hath strength thy shining Rayes once to behold ?
 And is thy splendid Throne erect so high
 As to approach it can no earthly mould ?
 How full of glory, then, must thy Creator be
 Who gave this bright light luster unto thee :
 Admir'd, ador'd for ever be that Majesty !"

Silent, alone, where none or saw or heard,
 In pathless paths I lead my wandring feet,
 My humble Eyes to lofty Skyes I rear'd :
 To sing some Song my mazed Muse thought meet ;
 My great Creator I would magnifie,

That nature had thus decked liberally ;
But Ah, and Ah again, my imbecility !

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,
The black-clad Cricket bear a second part ;
They kept one tune and plaid on the same string,
Seeming to glory in their little Art.
Shall Creatures abject thus their voices raise,
And in their kind resound their makers praise,
Whilst I as mute can warble forth no higher layes ?

When present times look back to Ages past,
And men in being fancy those are dead,
It makes things gone perpetually to last,
And calls back moneths and years that long since fled ;
It makes a man more aged in conceit
Then was *Methuselah* or 's grand-sire great,
While of their persons & their acts his mind doth treat.

Sometimes in *Eden* fair he seems to be ;
Sees glorious *Adam* there made Lord of all ;
Fancyes the Apple dangle on the Tree,
That turn'd his Sovereign to a naked thral,
Who like a miscreant's driven from that place,
To get his bread with pain and sweat of face,
A penalty impos'd on his backsiding Race.

Here sits our Grandame in retired place,
And in her lap her bloody *Cain* new born ;
The weeping Imp oft looks her in the face,
Bewails his unknown hap and fate forlorn :
His Mother sighs to think of Paradise,
And how she lost her bliss to be more wise,
Believing him that was and is Father of lies.

Here *Cain* and *Abel* come to sacrifice ;
Fruits of the Earth and Fatlings each do bring :
On *Abels* gift the fire descends from Skies,
But no such sign on false *Cain's* offering.
With sullen hateful looks he goes his wayes,
Hath thousand thoughts to end his brothers dayes,
Upon whose blood his future good he hopes to raise.

There *Abel* keeps his sheep, no ill he thinks ;
His brother comes, then acts his fratricide :

The Virgin Earth of blood her first draught drinks,
 But since that time she often hath been cloy'd.
 The wretch, with gastly face and dreadful mind,
 Thinks each he sees will serve him in his kind,
 Though none on Earth but kindred near then could he find.

Who fancyes not his looks now at the Barr?
 His face like death, his heart with horror fraught.
 Nor Male-factor ever felt like warr
 When deep despair with wish of life hath fought.
 Branded with guilt and crusht with treble woes,
 A Vagabond to Land of *Nod* he goes ;
 A City builds, that wals might him secure from foes.

Who thinks not oft upon the Fathers ages?
 Their long descent ; how nephews sons they saw ;
 The starry observations of those Sages,
 And how their precepts to their sons were law ;
 How Adam sigh'd to see his Progeny
 Cloath'd all in his black sinfull Livery,
 Who neither guilt nor yet the punishment could fly.

Our Life compare we with their length of dayes ;
 Who to the tenth of theirs doth now arrive ?
 And though thus short, we shorten many wayes,
 Living so little while we are alive :
 In eating, drinking, sleeping, vain delight,
 So unawares comes on perpetual night,
 And puts all pleasures vain unto eternal flight.

When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
 And then the earth, though old, stil clad in green
 The stones and trees insensible of time,
 Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen ;
 If winter come and greeness then do fade,
 A Spring returns and they more youthful made ;
 But Man grows old, lies down, remains where once he 's laid :

By birth more noble then those creatures all,
 Yet seems by nature and by custome curs'd :
 No sooner born but grief and care makes fall,
 That state obliterate he had at first ;
 Nor youth nor strength nor wisdom spring again,
 Nor habitations long their names retain,
 But in oblivion to the final day remain.

Shall I, then, praise the heavens, the trees, the earth,
Because their beauty and their strength last longer?
Shall I wish there or never to had birth,
Because they 're bigger, & their bodyes stronger?
Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade, and dye,
And when unmade so ever shall they lye;
But man was made for endless immortality.

Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm,
Close sate I by a goodly Rivers side,
Where gliding streams the Rocks did overwhelm;
A lonely place, with pleasures dignif'd.
I once that lov'd the shady woods so well
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel;
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.

While on the stealing stream I fixt mine eye,
Which to the long'd for Ocean held its course,
I markt nor crooks nor rubs that there did lye
Could hinder ought, but still augment its force:
"Oh happy Flood," quoth I, "that holds thy race
Till thou arrive at thy beloved place,
Nor is it rocks or shoals that can obstruct thy pace.,

"Nor is 't enough that thou alone may'st slide,
But hundred brooks in thy clear waves do meet;
So hand in hand along with thee they glide
To *Thetis* house, where all imbrace and greet:
Thou Emblem true of what I count the best,
O could I lead my Rivolets to rest,
So may we press to that vast mansion ever blest !

"Ye Fish which in this liquid Region 'bide,
That for each season have your habitation,
Now salt, now fresh, where you think best to glide
To unknown coasts to give a visitation,
In Lakes and ponds you leave your numerous fry;
So nature taught, and yet you know not why,
You watry folk that know not your felicity.

"Look how the wantons frisk to tast the air,
Then to the colder bottome streight they dive;
Eftsoon to *Neptune*'s glassie Hall repair,
To see what trade they great ones there do drive,
Who forage o're the spacious sea-green field
And take the trembling prey before it yield,
Whose armour is their scales, their spreading fins their shield."

While musing thus, with contemplation fed,
And thousand fancies buzzing in my brain,
The sweet-tongu'd Philomel percht ore my head,
And chanted forth a most melodious strain;
Which rapt me so with wonder and delight
I judg'd my hearing better then my sight,
And wisht me wings with her a while to take my flight.

"O merry Bird," said I, "that fears no snares,
That neither toyles nor hoards up in thy barn,
Feels no sad thoughts, nor cruciating cares
To gain more good or shun what might thee harm;
Thy cloaths ne're wear, thy meat is every where,
Thy bed a bough, thy drink the water cleer;
Reminds not what is past, nor whats to come dost fear.

"The dawning morn with songs thou dost prevent,
Sets hundred notes unto thy feathered crew,
So each one tunes his pretty instrument
And, warbling out the old, begin anew;
And thus they pass their youth in summer season,
Then follow thee into a better Region,
Where winter 's never felt by that sweet airy legion."

Man at the best a creature frail and vain,
In knowledge ignorant, in strength but weak,
Subject to sorrows, losses, sickness, pain,
Each storm his state, his mind, his body break;
From some of these he never finds cessation,
But day or night, within, without, vexation,
Troubles from foes, from friends, from dearest, near'st Relation.

And yet this sinfull creature, frail and vain,
This lump of wretchedness, of sin and sorrow,
This weather-beaten vessel wrackt with pain,
Joyes not in hope of an eternal morrow;
Nor all his losses, crosses, and vexation,
In weight, in frequency and long duration,
Can make him deeply groan for that divine Translation.

The Mariner that on smooth waves doth glide
Sings merrily and steers his Barque with ease,
As if he had command of wind and tide,
And now become great Master of the seas;
But suddenly a storm spoiles all the sport,
And makes him long for a more quiet port,
Which 'gainst all adverse winds may serve for fort.

So he that saileth in this world of pleasure,
 Feeding on sweets, that never bit of th' sowre,
 That's full of friends, of honour, and of treasure,
 Fond fool, he takes this earth ev'n for heav'ns bower.
 But sad affliction comes & makes him see
 Here's neither honour, wealth, nor safety :
 Only above is found all with security.

O Time, the fatal wrack of mortal things,
 That draws oblivious curtains over kings,
 Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not,
 Their names without a Record are forgot,
 Their parts, their ports, their pomp's all laid in th' dust,
 Nor wit nor gold nor buildings scape times rust :
 But he whose name is grav'd in the white stone
 Shall last and shine when all of these are gone.

A LETTER TO HER HUSBAND

Phæbus, make haste : the day's too long ; be gone ;
 The silent night's the fittest time for moan.
 But stay this once, unto my suit give ear,
 And tell my griefs in either Hemisphere ;
 And if the whirling of thy wheels don't drown'd
 The woful accents of my doleful sound,
 If in thy swift Carrier thou canst make stay,
 I crave this boon, this Errand by the way :
 Commend me to the man more lov'd then life ;
 Shew him the sorrows of his widdowed wife,
 My dumpish thoughts, my groans, my brakish tears,
 My sobs, my longing hopes, my doubting fears ;
 And if he love, how can he there abide ?
 My interest's more then all the world beside.
 He that can tell the starrs or Ocean sand,
 Or all the grass that in the Meads do stand,
 The leaves in th' woods, the hail or drops of rain,
 Or in a corn-field number every grain,
 Or every mote that in the sun-shine hops,
 May count my sighs and number all my drops.
 Tell him the countless steps that thou dost trace
 That once a day thy Spouse thou mayst imbrace ;
 And when thou canst not treat by loving mouth,
 Thy rayes afar salute her from the south.
 But for one moneth I see no day, poor soul,
 Like those far scituate under the pole,
 Which day by day long wait for thy arise :

O how they joy when thou dost light the skyes.
 O *Phæbus*, hadst thou but thus long from thine
 Restraine'd the beams of thy beloved shine,
 At thy return, if so thou could'st or durst,
 Behold a Chaos blacker then the first.
 Tell him here 's worse then a confused matter —
 His little world 's a fathom under water ;
 Nought but the fervor of his ardent beams
 Hath power to dry the torrent of these streams.
 Tell him I would say more, but cannot well :
 Oppressed minds abruptest tales do tell.
 Now post with double speed, mark what I say ;
 By all our loves conjure him not to stay.

LONGING FOR HEAVEN

As weary pilgrim now at rest
 Hugs with delight his silent nest,
 His wasted limbes now lye full soft
 That myrie steps have troden oft,
 Blesses himself to think upon
 his dangers past and travailes done ;
 The burning sun no more shall heat,
 Nor stormy raines on him shall beat ;
 The bryars and thornes no more shall scratch,
 nor hungry wolves at him shall catch ;
 He erring pathes no more shall tread,
 nor wild fruits eate in stead of bread ;
 For waters cold he doth not long,
 for thirst no more shall parch his tongue ;
 No rugged stones his feet shall gaule,
 nor stumps nor rocks cause him to fall ;
 All cares and feares he bids farewell,
 and meanes in safity now to dwell :
 A pilgrim I on earth perplext,
 with sinns, with cares and sorrows vext,
 By age and paines brought to decay,
 and my Clay house mouldring away,
 Oh how I long to be at rest
 and soare on high among the blest !
 This body shall in silence sleep,
 Mine eyes no more shall ever weep,
 No fainting fits shall me assaile,
 nor grinding paines my body fraile,
 With cares and fears ne'r cumbred be,
 Nor losses know nor sorrowes see.

What tho my flesh shall there consume?
 it is the bed Christ did perfume ;
 And when a few yeares shall be gone,
 this mortall shall be cloth'd upon :
 A Corrupt Carcasse downe it lyes,
 a glorious body it shall rise ;
 In weaknes and dishonour sowne,
 in power 't is rais'd by Christ alone.
 Then soule and body shall unite,
 and of their maker have the sight.
 Such lasting joyes shall there behold
 as eare ne'r heard nor tongue e'er told.
 Lord, make me ready for that day :
 then Come, deare bridgrome, Come away !

Philip Freneau [1752-1832]

ON A HESSIAN DEBARKATION

1776

*There is a book, tho' not a book of rhymes,
 Where truth severe records a nation's crime ; —
 To check such monarchs as with brutal might
 Wanton in blood, and trample on the right.*

Rejoice, O Death ! — Britannia's tyrant sends
 From German plains his myriads to our shore ;
 The Caledonian with the English joined : —
 Bring them, ye winds, but waft them back no more.

To these far climes with stately step they come,
 Resolved all prayers, all prowess to defy ;
 Smit with the love of countries not their own,
 They come, indeed, to conquer — not to die.

In the slow breeze (I hear their funeral song),
 The dance of ghosts the infernal tribes prepare :
 To hell's dark mansions haste, ye abandoned throng,
 Drinking from German sculls old *Odin's* beer.

From dire Cesarea, forced, these slaves of kings,
 Quick, let them take their way on eagle's wings :
 To thy strong posts, Manhattan's isle, repair,
 To meet the vengeance that awaits them there ! —

TO THE MEMORY

Of the brave Americans, under General Greene,
in South Carolina, who fell in the
action of September 8, 1781.

At Eutaw springs the valiant died :
Their limbs with dust are cover'd o'er —
Weep on, ye springs, your tearful tide ;
How many heroes are no more !

If in this wreck of ruin, they
Can yet be thought to claim a tear,
O smite thy gentle breast, and say
The friends of freedom slumber here !

Thou, who shalt trace this bloody plain,
If goodness rules thy generous breast,
Sigh for the wasted rural reign ;
Sigh for the shepherds, sunk to rest !

Stranger, their humble graves adorn ;
You too may fall, and ask a tear :
'T is not the beauty of the morn
That proves the evening shall be clear —

They saw their injur'd country's woe ;
The flaming town, the wasted field ;
Then rush'd to meet the insulting foe ;
They took the spear — but left the shield,

Led by thy conquering genius, Greene,
The Britons they compell'd to fly :
None distant view'd the fatal plain,
None griev'd, in such a cause, to die —

But, like the Parthian, fam'd of old,
Who, flying, still their arrows threw ;
These routed Britons, full as bold,
Retreated, and retreating slew.

Now rest in peace, our patriot band ;
Though far from Nature's limits thrown,
We trust, they find a happier land,
A brighter sun-shine of their own.

ARNOLD'S DEPARTURE

With evil omens from the harbour sails
 The ill-fated ship that worthless Arnold bears,
 God of the southern winds, call up thy gales,
 And whistle in rude fury round his ears.

With horrid waves insult his vessel's sides,
 And may the east wind on a leeward shore
 Her cables snap, while she in tumult rides,
 And shatter into shivers every oar,

And let the north wind to her ruin haste,
 With such a rage, as when from mountains high
 He rends the tall oak with his weighty blast,
 And ruin spreads, where'er his forces fly.

May not one friendly star that night be seen ;
 No Moon, attendant, dart one glimmering ray
 Nor may she ride on oceans more serene
 Than Greece, triumphant, found that stormy day,

When angry Pallas spent her rage no more
 On vanquish'd Ilium, then in ashes laid,
 But turn'd it on the barque that Ajax bore,
 Avenging thus her temple, and the maid.

When toss'd upon the vast Atlantic main
 Your groaning ship the southern gales shall tear,
 How will your sailors sweat, and you complain
 And meanly howl to Jove, that will not hear !

But if, at last, upon some winding shore
 A prey to hungry cormorants you lie,
 A wanton goat to every stormy power,
 And a fat lamb, in sacrifice, shall die.

ON THE EMIGRATION TO AMERICA AND
PEOPLING THE WESTERN COUNTRY

To western woods, and lonely plains,
Palemon from the crowd departs,
 Where Nature's wildest genius reigns,
 To tame the soil, and plant the arts —
 What wonders there shall freedom show,
 What mighty States successive grow !

From Europe's proud, despotic shores
 Hither the stranger takes his way,
 And in our new found world explores
 A happier soil, a milder sway,
 Where no proud despot holds him down,
 No slaves insult him with a crown.

What charming scenes attract the eye,
 On wild Ohio's savage stream !
 There Nature reigns, whose works outvie
 The boldest pattern art can frame ;
 There ages past have rolled away,
 And forests bloomed but to decay.

From these fair plains, these rural seats,
 So long concealed, so lately known,
 The unsocial Indian far retreats,
 To make some other clime his own,
 When other streams, less pleasing flow,
 And darker forests round him grow.

Great Sire of floods ! whose varied wave
 Through climes and countries takes its way,
 To whom creating Nature gave
 Ten thousand streams to swell thy sway !
 No longer shall *they* useless prove,
 Nor idly through the forests rove ;

Nor longer shall your princely flood
 From distant lakes be swelled in vain,
 Nor longer through a darksome wood
 Advance, unnoticed, to the main,
 Far other ends, the heavens decree —
 And commerce plans new freights for thee.

While virtue warms the generous breast,
 There heaven-born freedom shall reside,
 Nor shall the voice of war molest,
 Nor Europe's all-aspiring pride —
 There Reason shall new laws devise,
 And order from confusion rise.

Forsaking kings and regal state,
 With all their pomp and fancied bliss,
 The traveller owns, convinced though late,
 No realm so free, so blest as this —

The east is half to slaves consigned,
Where kings and priests enchain the mind.

O come the time, and haste the day,
When man shall man no longer crush,
When Reason shall enforce her sway,
Nor these fair regions raise our blush,
Where still the *African* complains,
And mourns his yet unbroken chains.

Far brighter scenes a future age,
The muse predicts, these States will hail,
Whose genius may the world engage,
Whose deeds may over death prevail,
And happier systems bring to view,
Than all the eastern sages knew.

STANZAS

Occasioned by the Ruins of a Country Inn,
unroofed and blown down in a storm

Where now these mingled ruins lie
A Temple once to Bacchus rose,
Beneath whose roof, aspiring high,
Full many a guest forgot his woes:

No more this dome, by tempests torn,
Affords a social safe retreat;
But ravens here, with eye forlorn,
And clustering bats henceforth shall meet.

The Priestess of this ruin'd shrine,
Unable to survive the stroke,
Presents no more the ruddy wine,
Her glasses gone, her china broke.

The friendly Host, whose social hand
Accosted strangers at the door,
Has left at length his wonted stand,
And greets the weary guest no more.

Old creeping time, that brings decay,
Might yet have spar'd these mouldering walls,
Alike beneath whose potent sway
A temple or a tavern falls.

Is this the place where mirth and joy,
 Coy nymphs and sprightly lads were found?
 Alas! no more the nymphs are coy,
 No more the flowing bowls go round.

Is this the place where festive song
 Deceiv'd the wintry hours away?
 No more the swains the tune prolong,
 No more the maidens join the lay:

Is this the place where Chloe slept
 In downy beds of blue and green?
 Dame Nature here no vigils kept,
 No cold, unfeeling guards were seen.

'T is gone! — and Chloe tempts no more,
 Deep, unrelenting silence reigns;
 Of all that pleas'd, that charm'd before,
 The tottering chimney scarce remains!

Ye tyrant winds, whose ruffian blast
 From locks and hinges rent the door.
 And all the roof to ruin cast,
 The roof that sheltered us before,

Your wrath appeased, I pray be kind
 If Mopsus should the dome renew;
 That we again may quaff his wine,
 Again collect our jovial crew.

THE ARGONAUT; OR, LOST ADVENTURER

True to his trade — the slave of fortune still —
 In a sweet isle, where never winter reigns,
 I found him at the foot of a tall hill,
 Mending old sails, and chewing sugar canes:
 Pale ivy round him grew, and mingled vines,
 Plaintains, bananas ripe, and yellow pines.

And flowering night-shade, with its dismal green,
 Ash-coloured iris, painted by the sun,
 And fair-haired hyacinth was near him seen,
 And China pinks by marygolds o'er-run: —
 "But what (said he) have men that sail the seas,
 "Ah, what have they to do with things like these!"

"I did not wish to leave those shades, not I,
 "Where Amoranda turns her spinning-wheel;
 "Charmed with the shallow stream, that murmured by,
 "I felt as blest as any swain could feel,
 "Who, seeking nothing that the world admires,
 "On one poor valley fixed his whole desires.

"With masts so trim, and sails as white as snow,
 "The painted barque deceived me from the land,
 "Pleased, on her sea-beat decks I wished to go,
 "Mingling my labours with her hardy band;
 "To reef the sail, to guide the foaming prow
 "As far as winds can waft, or oceans flow.

"To combat with the waves who first essayed,
 "Had these gay groves his lightsome heart beguiled,
 "His heart, attracted by the charming shade,
 "Had changed the deep sea for the woody wild;
 "And slighted all the gain that Neptune yields
 "For Damon's cottage, or Palemon's fields.

"His barque, the bearer of a feeble crew,
 "How could he trust when none had been to prove her;
 "Courage might sink when lands and shores withdrew,
 "And feeble hearts a thousand deaths discover:
 "But *Fortitude*, tho' woes and death await,
 "Still views bright skies, and leaves the dark to fate.

"From monkey climes where limes and lemons grow,
 "And the sweet orange swells her fruit so fair,
 "To wintry worlds, with heavy heart, I go
 "To face the cold glance of the northern bear,
 "Where lonely waves, far distant from the sun,
 "And gulphs, of mighty strength, their circuits run.

"But how disheartening is the wanderer's fate!
 "When conquered by the loud tempestuous main,
 "On him, no mourners in procession wait,
 "Nor do the sisters of the harp complain.—
 "On coral beds and deluged sands they sleep,
 "Who sink in storms, and mingle with the deep.

"T is folly all — and who can truly tell
 "What storms disturb the bosom of that main,
 "What ravenous fish in those dark climates dwell
 "That feast on men — then stay, my gentle swain!

"Bred in yon' happy shades, be happy there,
"And let these quiet groves claim all your care."

So spoke poor Ralph, and with a smooth sea gale
Fled from the magic of the enchanting shore,
But whether winds or waters did prevail
I saw the black ship n'er returning more,
Though long I walked the margin of the main,
And long have looked — and still must look in vain !

THE WILD HONEY SUCKLE

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet :
 No roving foot shall crush thee here,
 No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by ;
 Thus quietly thy summer goes,
 Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see your future doom ;
They died — nor were those flowers more gay,
The flowers that did in Eden bloom ;
 Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power
 Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came :
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same ;
 The space between, is but an hour,
 The frail duration of a flower.

THE INDIAN BURYING GROUND

In spite of all the learned have said,
I still my old opinion keep ;
The *posture*, that *we* give the dead,
Points out the soul's eternal sleep.

Not so the ancients of these lands —
The Indian, when from life released,
Again is seated with his friends,
And shares again the joyous feast.

His imaged birds, and painted bowl,
And venison, for a journey dressed,
Bespeak the nature of the soul,
Activity, that knows no rest.

His bow, for action ready bent,
And arrows, with a head of stone,
Can only mean that life is spent,
And not the old ideas gone.

Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way,
No fraud upon the dead commit —
Observe the swelling turf, and say
They do not *lie*, but here they *sit*.

Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted, half, by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.

Here still an aged elm aspires,
Beneath whose far-projecting shade
(And which the shepherd still admires)
The children of the forest played !

There oft a restless Indian queen
(Pale *Shebah*, with her braided hair)
And many a barbarous form is seen
To chide the man that lingers there.

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer, a shade !

And long shall timorous fancy see
The painted chief, and pointed spear,
And Reason's self shall bow the knee
To shadows and delusions here.

ON THE DEATH OF DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Thus, some tall tree that long hath stood
 The glory of its native wood,
 By storms destroyed, or length of years,
 Demands the tribute of our tears.

The pile, that took long time to raise,
 To dust returns by slow decays :
 But, when its destined years are o'er,
 We must regret the loss the more.

So long accustomed to your aid,
 The world laments your exit made ;
 So long befriended by your art,
 Philosopher, 't is hard to part ! —

When monarchs tumble to the ground,
 Successors easily are found :
 But, matchless Franklin ! what a few
 Can hope to rival such as you,
 Who seized from kings their sceptred pride,
 And turned the lightning's darts aside.

EPISTLE

From Dr. Franklin (deceased) to
 his Poetical Panegyrists, on some
 of their Absurd Compliments

Good Poets, who so full of pain,
 Are you sincere — or do you feign ?
 Love for your tribe I never had,
 Nor penned three stanzes, good or bad.

At funerals, sometimes, grief appears,
 Where legacies have purchased tears :
 'T is folly to be sad for nought,
 From me you never gained a groat.

To better trades I turned my views,
 And never meddled with the muse ;
 Great things I did for rising States,
 And kept the lightning from some pates.

This grand discovery, you adore it,
 But ne'er will be the better for it :

You still are subject to those fires,
For poets' houses have no spires.

Philosophers are famed for pride ;
But, pray, be modest — when I died,
No "sighs disturbed old ocean's bed,"
No "Nature wept" for Franklin dead !

That day, on which I left the coast,
A beggar-man was also lost :
If "Nature wept," you must agree
She wept for *him* — as well as *me*.

There 's reason even in telling lies —
In such profusion of her "sighs,"
She was too sparing of a tear —
In Carolina, all was clear :

And, if there fell some snow and sleet,
Why must it be my winding sheet ?
Snows oft have cloathed the *April* plain,
Have melted, and will melt again.

Poets, I pray you, say no more,
Or say what Nature said before ;
That reason should your pens direct,
Or else you pay me no respect.

Let reason be your constant rule,
And Nature, trust me, is no fool —
When to the dust great men she brings,
"MAKE HER DO — SOME UNCOMMON THINGS."

THE AMERICAN SOLDIER

(A Picture from the Life)

Deep in a vale, a stranger now to arms,
Too poor to shine in courts, too proud to beg,
He, who once warred on Saratoga's plains,
Sits musing o'er his scars, and wooden leg.

Remembering still the toil of former days,
To *other* hands he sees his earnings paid ; —
They share the due reward — *he* feeds on praise,
Lost in the abyss of want, misfortune's shade.

Far, far from domes where splendid tapers glare,
 'Tis his from dear bought peace no wealth to win,
 Removed alike from courtly cringing 'quires,
 The great-man's *Levee*, and the proud man's grin.

Sold are those arms which once on Britons blazed,
 When, flushed with conquest, to the charge they came ;
 That power repelled, and *Freedom's* fabrick raised,
 She leaves her soldier — *famine* and a *name* !

THE MILLENNIUM — TO A RANTING FIELD ORATOR

With aspect wild, in ranting strain
 You bring the brilliant period near,
 When monarchy will close her reign
 And wars and warriors disappear ;
 The lion and the lamb will stray,
 And, social, walk the woodland way.

I fear, with superficial view
 You contemplate dame nature's plan : —
 She various forms of being drew,
 And made the common tyrant — man :
 She form'd them all with wise design,
 Distinguish'd each, and drew the line.

Observe the lion's visage bold
 His iron tooth, his murderous claw,
 His aspect cast in anger's mould ;
 The strength of steel is in his paw :
 Could he be meant with lambs to stray
 Or feed along the woodland way ?

Since first his race on earth began
 War was his trade and war will be :
 And when he quits that ancient plan
 With milder natures to agree,
 He will be changed to something new
 And have some other part to do.

One system see through all this frame,
 Apparent discord still prevails ;
 The forest yields to active flame,
 The ocean swells with stormy gales ;
 No season did the God decree
 When leagued in friendship these should be.

And do you think that human kind
 Can shun the all-pervading law —
 That passion's slave we ever find —
 Who discord from their nature draw: —
 Ere discord can from man depart
 He must assume a different heart.

Yet in the slow advance of things
 A time may come our race may rise,
 By reason's aid to stretch their wings,
 And see the light with other eyes;
 And when the ancient mist is pass'd,
 To find their nature changed at last;

The sun himself, the powers ordain,
 Should in no perfect circle stray;
 He shuns the equatorial plane,
 Prefers an odd serpentine way,
 And lessens yearly, sophists prove,
 His angle in the voids above.

When moving in his ancient line,
 And no oblique ecliptic near,
 With some new influence he may shine
 But you and I will not be here
 To see the lion shed his teeth
 Or kings forget the trade of death —

Joel Barlow

[1754-1812]

THE HASTY PUDDING

CANTO I

Ye Alps audacious, through the heavens that rise,
 To cramp the day and hide me from the skies;
 Ye Gallic flags, that o'er their heights unfurled,
 Bear death to kings, and freedom to the world,
 I sing not you. A softer theme I choose,
 A virgin theme, unconscious of the Muse,
 But fruitful, rich, well suited to inspire
 The purest frenzy of poetic fire.

Despise it not, ye bards to terror steel'd,
 Who hurl your thunders round the epic field;
 Nor ye who strain your midnight throats to sing
 Joys that the vineyard and the still-house bring;

Or on some distant fair your notes employ,
 And speak of raptures that you ne'er enjoy.
 I sing the sweets I know, the charms I feel,
 My morning incense, and my evening meal,
 The sweets of Hasty-Pudding. Come, dear bowl,
 Glide o'er my palate, and inspire my soul.
 The milk beside thee, smoking from the kine,
 Its substance mingled, married in with thine,
 Shall cool and temper thy superior heat,
 And save the pains of blowing while I eat.

Oh ! could the smooth, the emblematic song
 Flow like thy genial juices o'er my tongue,
 Could those mild morsels in my numbers chime,
 And as they roll in substance, roll in rhyme,
 No more thy awkward, unpoetic name
 Should shun the muse, or prejudice thy fame ;
 But rising grateful to the accustom'd ear,
 All bards should catch it, and all realms revere !

Assist me first with pious toil to trace
 Through wrecks of time, thy lineage and thy race ;
 Declare what lovely squaw, in days of yore,
 Ere great Columbus sought thy native shore
 First gave thee to the world ; her works of fame
 Have lived indeed, but lived without a name.
 Some tawny Ceres, goddess of her days,
 First learn'd with stones to crack the well dried maize,
 Through the rough sieve to shake the golden shower,
 In boiling water stir the yellow flour :
 The yellow flour, bestrew'd and stirr'd with haste,
 Swells in the flood and thickens to a paste,
 Then puffs and wallops, rises to the brim,
 Drinks the dry knobs that on the surface swim ;
 The knobs at last the busy ladle breaks,
 And the whole mass its true consistence takes.

Could but her sacred name, unknown so long,
 Rise, like her labors, to the son of song,
 To her, to them, I'd consecrate my lays,
 And blow her pudding with the breath of praise.
 If 't was Oella whom I sang before,
 I'd here ascribe her one great virtue more.
 Nor through the rich Peruvian realms alone
 The fame of Sol's sweet daughter should be known,
 But o'er the world's wide clime should live secure,
 Far as his rays extend, as long as they endure.

Dear Hasty-Pudding, what unpromised joy
 Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy !

Doom'd o'er the world through devious paths to roam,
Each clime my country, and each house my home,
My soul is soothed, my cares have found an end,
I greet my long lost, unforgotten friend.

For thee through Paris, that corrupted town,
How long in vain I wandered up and down,
Where shameless Bacchus, with his drenching hoard,
Cold from his cave usurps the morning board.
London is lost in smoke and steep'd in tea;
No Yankee there can lisp the name of thee;
The uncouth word, a libel on the town,
Would call a proclamation from the crown.
From climes oblique, that fear the sun's full rays,
Chilled in their fogs, exclude the generous maize:
A grain whose rich, luxuriant growth requires
Short, gentle showers and bright, ethereal fires.
But here, though distant from our native shore,
With mutual glee we meet and laugh once more,
The same! I know thee by that yellow face,
That strong complexion of true Indian race,
Which time can never change, nor soil impair,
Nor Alpine snows, nor Turkey's morbid air;
For endless years, through every mild domain,
Where grows the maize, there thou art sure to reign.

But man, more fickle, the bold license claims,
In different realms to give thee different names.
Thee, the soft nations round the warm Levant
Polenta call, the French, of course, *Polente*.
E'en in thy native regions, how I blush
To hear the Pennsylvanians call thee *Mush!*
On Hudson's banks, while men of Belgic spawn
Insult and eat thee by the name *Suppawn*,
All spurious appellations, void of truth;
I've better known thee from my earliest youth:
Thy name is *Hasty-Pudding!* thus my sire
Was wont to greet thee fuming from the fire;
And while he argued in thy just defence
With logic clear, he thus explained the sense:—
“In *haste* the boiling cauldron, o'er the blaze,
Receives and cooks the ready powdered maize;
In *haste* 't is served, and then in equal *haste*,
With cooling milk, we make the sweet repast.
No carving to be done, no knife to grate
The tender ear, and wound the stony plate;
But the smooth spoon, just fitted to the lip,
And taught with art the yielding mass to dip,

By frequent journeys to the bowl well stored,
Performs the hasty honors of the board.”
Such is thy name, significant and clear,
A name, a sound to every Yankee dear,
But most to me, whose heart and palate chaste
Preserve my pure hereditary taste.

There are who strive to stamp with disrepute
The luscious food, because it feeds the brute ;
In tropes of high-strain’d wit, while gaudy prigs
Compare thy nursling man, to pamper’d pigs ;
With sovereign scorn I treat the vulgar jest,
Nor fear to share thy bounties with the beast.
What though the generous cow gives me to quaff
The milk nutritious ; am I then a calf ?

Or can the genius of the noisy swine,
Though nursed on pudding, claim a kin to mine ?
Sure the sweet song, I fashion to thy praise,
Runs more melodious than the notes they raise.
My song resounding in its grateful glee,
No merit claims : I praise myself in thee.

My father loved thee through his length of days !
For thee his fields were shaded o’er with maize ;
From thee what health, what vigor he possess’d
Ten sturdy freemen from his loins attest ;
Thy constellation ruled my natal morn,
And all my bones were made of Indian corn.

Delicious grain ! whatever form it take,
To roast or boil, to smother or to bake,
In every dish ’t is welcome still to me,
But most, my *Hasty-Pudding*, most in thee.
Let the green succotash with thee contend,
Let beans and corn their sweetest juices blend,
Let butter drench them in its yellow tide,
And a long slice of bacon grace their sides ;
Not all the plate, how famed soe’er it be,
Can please my palate like a bowl of thee.

Some talk of Hoe-Cake, fair Virginia’s pride,
Rich Johnny-Cake, this mouth has often tried ;
Both please me well, their virtues much the same,
Alike their fabric, as allied their fame,
Except in dear New England, where the last
Receives a dash of pumpkin in the paste,
To give it sweetness and improve the taste.
But place them all before me, smoking hot,
The big, round dumpling, rolling from the pot,
The pudding of the bag, whose quivering breast,

With suet lined, leads on the Yankee feast,
 The Charlotte brown, within whose crusty sides
 A belly soft the pulpy apple hides ;
 The yellow bread whose face like amber glows,
 And all the Indian that the bake-pan knows, —
 Ye tempt me not, my fav'rite greets my eyes,
 To that loved bowl my spoon by instinct flies.

CANTO II

To mix the food by vicious rules of art,
 To kill the stomach and to sink the heart,
 To make mankind to social virtue sour,
 Cram o'er each dish and be what they devour ;
 For this the Kitchen Muse first framed her book,
 Commanding sweets to stream from every cook ;
 Children no more their antic gambols tried,
 And friends to physic wondered why they died.

Not so the Yankee — his abundant feast,
 With simples furnished and with plainness drest,
 A numerous offspring gathers round the board,
 And cheers alike the servant and the lord ;
 Whose well-bought hunger prompts the joyous taste
 And health attends them from the short repast.

While the full pail rewards the milk-maid's toil,
 The mother sees the morning cauldron boil ;
 To stir the pudding next demands their care ;
 To spread the table and the bowls prepare ;
 To feed the children as their portions cool,
 And comb their heads and send them off to school.

Yet may the simplest dish some rules impart,
 For nature scorns not all the aids of art.
 E'en *Hasty-Pudding*, purest of all food,
 May still be bad, indifferent, or good,
 As sage experience the short process guides,
 Or want of skill, or want of care presides.
 Whoe'er would form it on the surest plan,
 To rear the child and long sustain the man ;
 To shield the morals while it mends the size,
 And all the powers of every food supplies,
 Attend the lessons that the Muse shall bring,
 Suspend your spoons, and listen while I sing.

But since, O man ! thy life and health demand
 Not food alone but labor from thy hand,
 First in the field, beneath the sun's strong rays,
 Ask of thy Mother Earth the needful maize ;

She loves the race that courts her yielding soil,
And gives her bounties to the sons of toil.

When now the ox, obedient to thy call,
Repays the loan that filled the winter stall,
Pursue his traces o'er the furrow'd plain,
And plant in measur'd hills the golden grain.
But when the tender germ begins to shoot,
And the green spire declares the sprouting root,
Then guard your nursling from each greedy foe,
The insidious worm, the all-devouring crow.
A little ashes, sprinkled round the spire,
Soon steep'd in rain, will bid the worm retire;
The feather'd robber with his hungry maw
Swift flies the field before your man of straw,
A frightful image, such as schoolboys bring,
When met to burn the pope, or hang the king.

Thrice in the season, through each verdant row
Wield the strong ploughshare and the faithful hoe:
The faithful hoe; a double task that takes,
To till the summer corn and roast the winter cakes.

Slow springs the blade while check'd by chilling rains,
E'er yet the sun the seat of Cancer gains;
But when his fiercest fires emblaze the land,
Then start the juices, then the roots expand;
Then, like a column of Corinthian mould,
The stalk struts upward and the leaves unfold;
The busy branches all the ridges fill,
Entwine their arms, and kiss from hill to hill.
Here cease to vex them, all your cares are done:
Leave the last labors to the parent sun;
Beneath his genial smiles, the well-drest field,
When autumn calls, a plenteous crop shall yield.

Now the strong foliage bears the standards high,
And shoots the tall top-gallants to the sky;
The suckling ears their silky fringes bend,
And pregnant grown, their swelling coats distend;
The loaded stalk, while still the burthen grows,
O'erhangs the space that runs between the rows.
High as a hop-field waves the silent grove,
A safe retreat for little thefts of love,
When the fledged roasting-ears invite the maid,
To meet her swain beneath the new-formed shade;
His generous hand unloads the cumbrous hill,
And the green spoils her ready basket fill;
Small compensation for the two-fold bliss,
The promised wedding and the present kiss.

Slight depredations these : but now the moon
 Calls from his hollow tree the sly raccoon ;
 And while by night he bears his prize away,
 The bolder squirrel labors through the day.
 Both thieves alike, but provident of time —
 A virtue rare that almost hides their crime.
 Then let them steal the little stores they can,
 And fill their granaries from the toils of man ;
 We've one advantage where they take no part :
 With all their wiles they ne'er have found the art
 To boil the *Hasty-Pudding*; here we shine
 Superior far to tenants of the pine ;
 This envied boon to man shall still belong,
 Unshared by them in substance or in song.

At last the closing season browns the plain,
 And ripe October gathers in the grain ;
 Deep loaded carts the spacious corn-house fill,
 The sack distended marches to the mill ;
 The lab'ring mill beneath the burthen groans,
 And showers the future pudding from the stones ;
 Till the glad housewife greets the powder'd gold,
 And the new crop exterminates the old.
 Ah ! who can sing what every wight must feel,
 The joy that enters with the bag of meal.
 A general jubilee pervades the house,
 Wakes every child and gladdens every mouse.

CANTO III

The days grow short ; but though the falling sun
 To the glad swain proclaims his day's work done,
 Night's pleasing shades his various tasks prolong,
 And yield new subjects to my various song.
 For now, the corn-house filled, the harvest home,
 The invited neighbors to the *Husking* come ;
 A frolic scene, where work, and mirth, and play,
 Unite their charms to chase the hours away.

Where the huge heap lies centred in the hall,
 The lamp suspended from the cheerful wall,
 Brown corn-fed nymphs, and strong hard-handed beaus,
 Alternate ranged, extend in circling rows,
 Assume their seats, the solid mass attack ;
 The dry husks rustle, and the corn-cobs crack ;
 The song, the laugh, alternate notes resound,
 And the sweet cider trips in silence round.

The laws of husking every wight can tell —
 And sure no laws he ever keeps so well :

For each red ear a general kiss he gains,
 With each smut ear he smuts the luckless swains ;
 But when to some sweet maid a prize is cast,
 Red as her lips and taper as her waist,
 She walks the round, and culls one favored beau,
 Who leaps, the luscious tribute to bestow.
 Various the sport as are the wits and brains
 Of well-pleased lasses and contending swains ;
 Till the vast mound of corn is swept away,
 And he that gets the last ear wins the day.

Meanwhile the housewife urges all her care,
 The well-earned feast to hasten and prepare.
 The sifted meal already waits her hand,
 The milk is strained, the bowls in order stand,
 The fire flames high ; and, as a pool (that takes
 The headlong stream that o'er the mill-dam breaks)
 Foams, roars, and rages, with incessant toils,
 So the vexed cauldron rages, roars, and boils.

First with clean salt she seasons well the food,
 Then strews the flour and thickens all the flood.
 Long o'er the simmering fire she lets it stand —
 To stir it well demands a stronger hand :
 The husband takes his turn, and round and round
 The paddle flies ; at last the toil is crown'd ;
 When to the board the thronging huskers pour,
 And take their seats as at the corn before.

I leave them to their feast. There still belong
 More useful matters to my faithful song ;
 For rules there are, though ne'er unfolded yet,
 Nice rules and wise, how pudding should be eat.

Some with molasses grace the luscious treat,
 And mix, like bards, the useful and the sweet.
 A wholesome dish, and well deserving praise,
 A great resource in those bleak wintry days,
 When the chilled earth lies buried deep in snow,
 And raging Boreas dries the shivering cow.

Blest cow ! thy praise shall still my notes employ,
 Great source of health, the only source of joy,
 Mother of Egypt's god ; — but sure, for me,
 Were I to leave my God, I 'd worship thee.
 How oft thy teats these pious hands have pressed !
 How oft thy bounties proved my only feast !
 How oft I 've fed thee with my favorite grain !
 And roared, like thee, to see thy children slain !

Ye swains who know her various worth to prize,
 Ah ! house her well from Winter's angry skies.

Potatoes, pumpkins, should her sadness cheer,
 Corn from your crib, and mashes from your beer;
 When spring returns, she 'll well acquit the loan,
 And nurse at once your infants and her own.

Milk then with pudding, I should always choose;
 To this in future I confine my Muse,
 Till she, in haste, some further hints unfold,
 Good for the young, nor useless to the old.
 First in your bowl the milk abundant take,
 Then drop with care along the silver lake
 Your flakes of pudding; these, at first, will hide
 Their little bulk beneath the swelling tide;
 But when their growing mass no more can sink,
 When the soft island looms above the brink,
 Then check your hand; you 've got the portion due,
 So taught my Sire, and what he taught is true.

There is a choice in spoons. Though small appear
 The nice distinction, yet to me 't is clear.
 The deep-bowled Gallic spoon, contrived to scoop
 In ample draughts the thin diluted soup,
 Performs not well in those substantial things,
 Whose mass adhesive to the metal clings;
 Where the strong labial muscles must embrace
 The gentle curve, and sweep the hollow space.
 With ease to enter and discharge the freight,
 A bowl less concave, but still more dilate,
 Becomes the pudding best. The shape, the size,
 A secret rests, unknown to vulgar eyes;
 Experienced feeders can alone impart
 A rule so much above the lore of art.

These tuneful lips, that thousand spoons have tried,
 With just precision could the point decide.
 Though not in song; the Muse but poorly shines
 In cones and cubes, and geometric lines,
 Yet the true form, as near as she can tell,
 Is that small section of a goose-egg shell
 Which in two equal portions shall divide
 The distance from the centre to the side.

Fear not to slaver; 't is no deadly sin:—
 Like the free Frenchman, from your joyous chin
 Suspend the ready napkin; or, like me,
 Poise with one hand your bowl upon your knee;
 Just in the zenith your wise head project,
 Your full spoon, rising in a line direct,
 Bold as a bucket, heed no drops that fall.
 The wide-mouthed bowl will surely catch them all!

ADVICE TO A RAVEN IN RUSSIA

Black fool, why winter here? These frozen skies,
Worn by your wings and deafened by your cries,
Should warn you hence, where milder suns invite,
And Day alternates with his mother Night.
You fear, perhaps, your food will fail you there —
Your human carnage, that delicious fare,
That lured you hither, following still your friend,
The great Napoleon, to the world's bleak end.
You fear because the southern climes pour'd forth
Their clustering nations to infest the north,
Bavarians, Austrians, those who drink the Po,
And those who skirt the Tuscan seas below,
With all Germania, Austria, Belgia, Gaul,
Doom'd here to wade through slaughter to their fall.
You fear he left behind no wars to feed
His feathered cannibals and nurse the breed?
Fear not, my screamer, call your greedy train,
Sweep over Europe, hurry back to Spain —
You 'll find his legions there, the valiant crew,
Please best their masters when they toil for you.
Abundant there they spread the country o'er,
And taint the breeze with every nation's gore —
Iberian, Russian, British, widely strown;
But still more wide and copious flows their own.
Go where you will, Calabria, Malta, Greece.
Egypt and Syria still his fame increase.
Domingo's fattened isle and India's plains
Glow deep with purple drawn from Gallic veins.
No raven's wing can stretch the flight so far
As the torn bandrols of Napoleon's war.
Choose then your climate, fix your best abode —
He 'll make you deserts and he 'll bring you blood.
How could you fear a dearth? Have not mankind,
Though slain by millions, millions left behind?
Fear nothing, then! hatch fast your ravenous brood,
Teach them to cry to Buonaparte for food.
They 'll be, like you, of all his suppliant train,
The only class that never cries in vain!
For see what natural benefits you lend —
The surest way to fix the mutual friend —
While on his slaughtered troops your tribes are fed,
You cleanse his camp and carry off his dead,
Imperial scavenger, but now, you know,
Your work is vain amid these hills of snow.

His tentless troops are marbled through with frost,
And changed to crystal when the breath is lost.
Mere trunks of ice, though limn'd like human frames,
And lately warmed with life's endearing flames.
They cannot taint the air, the world infest,
Nor can you tear one fiber from their breast.
No ! from their visual sockets as they lie,
With beak and claws you cannot pluck an eye —
The frozen orb, preserving still its form,
Defies your talons as it braves the storm,
But stands and stares to God as if to know,
In what curst hands he leaves his world below !
Fly then, or starve, though all the dreadful road
From Minsk to Moscow with their bodies strow'd
May count some myriads, yet they can't suffice
To feed you more beneath these dreadful skies.
Go back and winter in the wilds of Spain ;
Feast there awhile, and in the next campaign
Rejoin your master, for you 'll find him then,
With his new millions of the race of men,
Clothed in his thunders, all his flags unfurl'd,
Raging and storming o'er a prostrate world !
War after war his hungry soul requires ;
State after state shall sink beneath his fires.
Yet other Spains in victim smoke shall rise.
And other Moscows suffocate the skies.
Each land lie reeking with its people slain,
And not a stream run bloodless to the main,
Till men resume their souls, and dare to shed
Earth's total vengeance on the monster's head !

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

THANATOPSIS

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language ; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images

Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart ; —
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around —
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air —
Comes a still voice — Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course ; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world — with kings,
The powerful of the earth — the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, — the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;
The venerable woods — rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green ; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. — Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings — yet the dead are there :
And millions in those solitudes, since first

The flight of years began, have laid them down
 In their last sleep — the dead reign there alone.
 So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
 In silence from the living, and no friend
 Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
 Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
 When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
 Plod on, and each one as before will chase
 His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
 Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
 And make their bed with thee. As the long train
 Of ages glide away, the sons of men,
 The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
 In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
 The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man —
 Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
 By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
 The innumerable caravan, which moves
 To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,
 Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
 Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
 About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE ENTRANCE TO A WOOD

Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth which needs
 No school of long experience, that the world
 Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen
 Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,
 To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood
 And view the haunts of Nature. The calm shade
 Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze
 That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a balm
 To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing here
 Of all that pained thee in the haunts of men,
 And made thee loathe thy life. The primal curse
 Fell, it is true, upon the unsinning earth,
 But not in vengeance. God hath yoked to guilt
 Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these shades
 Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick roof

Of green and stirring branches is alive
 And musical with birds, that sing and sport
 In wantonness of spirit; while below
 The squirrel, with raised paws and form erect,
 Chirps merrily. Throngs of insects in the shade
 Try their thin wings and dance in the warm beam
 That waked them into life. Even the green trees
 Partake the deep contentment; as they bend
 To the soft winds, the sun from the blue sky
 Looks in and sheds a blessing on the scene.
 Scarce less the cleft-born wild-flower seems to enjoy
 Existence, than the wingèd plunderer
 That sucks its sweets. The mossy rocks themselves,
 And the old and ponderous trunks of prostrate trees
 That lead from knoll to knoll a causey rude
 Or bridge the sunken brook, and their dark roots,
 With all their earth upon them, twisting high,
 Breathe fixed tranquillity. The rivulet
 Sends forth glad sounds, and tripping o'er its bed
 Of pebbly sands, or leaping down the rocks,
 Seems, with continuous laughter, to rejoice
 In its own being. Softly tread the marge,
 Lest from her midway perch thou scare the wren
 That dips her bill in water. The cool wind,
 That stirs the stream in play, shall come to thee,
 Like one that loves thee nor will let thee pass
 Ungreeted, and shall give its light embrace.

TO A WATER FOWL

Whither, midst falling dew,
 While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
 Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
 Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
 Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
 As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
 Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
 Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
 Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
 On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
 Teaches thy way along that pathless coast —

The desert and illimitable air —
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou 'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

A WINTER PIECE

The time has been that these wild solitudes,
Yet beautiful as wild, were trod by me
Oftener than now; and when the ills of life
Had chafed my spirit — when the unsteady pulse
Beat with strange flutterings — I would wander forth
And seek the woods. The sunshine on my path
Was to me as a friend. The swelling hills,
The quiet dells retiring far between,
With gentle invitation to explore
Their windings, were a calm society
That talked with me and soothed me. Then the chant
Of birds, and chime of brooks, and soft caress
Of the fresh sylvan air, made me forget
The thoughts that broke my peace, and I began
To gather simples by the fountain's brink,
And lose myself in day-dreams. While I stood
In Nature's loneliness, I was with one
With whom I early grew familiar, one
Who never had a frown for me, whose voice
Never rebuked me for the hours I stole
From cares I loved not, but of which the world

Deems highest, to converse with her. When shrieked
The bleak November winds, and smote the woods,
And the brown fields were herbless, and the shades,
That met above the merry rivulet,
Were spoiled, I sought, I loved them still; they seemed
Like old companions in adversity.
Still there was beauty in my walks; the brook,
Bordered with sparkling frost-work, was as gay
As with its fringe of summer flowers. Afar,
The village with its spires, the path of streams
And dim receding valleys, hid before
By interposing trees, lay visible
Through the bare grove, and my familiar haunts
Seemed new to me. Nor was I slow to come
Among them, when the clouds, from their still skirts,
Had shaken down on earth the feathery snow,
And all was white. The pure keen air abroad,
Albeit it breathed no scent of herb, nor heard
Love-call of bird nor merry hum of bee,
Was not the air of death. Bright mosses crept
Over the spotted trunks, and the close buds,
That lay along the boughs, instinct with life,
Patient, and waiting the soft breath of Spring,
Feared not the piercing spirit of the North.
The snow-bird twittered on the beechen bough,
And 'neath the hemlock, whose thick branches bent
Beneath its bright cold burden, and kept dry
A circle, on the earth, of withered leaves,
The partridge found a shelter. Through the snow
The rabbit sprang away. The lighter track
Of fox, and the raccoon's broad path, were there,
Crossing each other. From his hollow tree
The squirrel was abroad, gathering the nuts
Just fallen, that asked the winter cold and sway
Of winter blast, to shake them from their hold.

But Winter has yet brighter scenes — he boasts
Splendors beyond what gorgeous Summer knows;
Or Autumn with his many fruits, and woods
All flushed with many hues. Come when the rains
Have glazed the snow and clothed the trees with ice,
While the slant sun of February pours
Into the bowers a flood of light. Approach!
The incrusted surface shall upbear thy steps,
And the broad arching portals of the grove
Welcome thy entering. Look! the massy trunks

Are cased in the pure crystal; each light spray,
Nodding and tinkling in the breath of heaven,
Is studded with its trembling water-drops,
That glimmer with an amethystine light.
But round the parent-stem the long low boughs
Bend, in a glittering ring, and arbors hide
The glassy floor. Oh! you might deem the spot
The spacious cavern of some virgin mine,
Deep in the womb of earth — where the gems grow,
And diamonds put forth radiant rods and bud
With amethyst and topaz — and the place
Lit up, most royally, with the pure beam
That dwells in them. Or haply the vast hall
Or fairy palace, that outlasts the night,
And fades not in the glory of the sun; —
Where crystal columns send forth slender shafts
And crossing arches; and fantastic aisles
Wind from the sight in brightness, and are lost
Among the crowded pillars. Raise thine eye;
Thou seest no cavern roof, no palace vault;
There the blue sky and the white drifting cloud
Look in. Again the wildered fancy dreams
Of spouting fountains, frozen as they rose,
And fixed, with all their branching jets, in air,
And all their sluices sealed. All, all is light;
Light without shade. But all shall pass away
With the next sun. From numberless vast trunks
Loosened, the crashing ice shall make a sound
Like the far roar of rivers, and the eve
Shall close o'er the brown woods as it was wont.

And it is pleasant, when the noisy streams
Are just set free, and milder suns melt off
The plashy snow, save only the firm drift
In the deep glen or the close shade of pines —
'T is pleasant to behold the wreathes of smoke
Roll up among the maples of the hill,
Where the shrill sound of youthful voices wakes
The shriller echo, as the clear pure lymph,
That from the wounded trees, in twinkling drops,
Falls, mid the golden brightness of the morn,
Is gathered in with brimming pails, and oft,
Wielded by sturdy hands, the stroke of axe
Makes the woods ring. Along the quiet air,
Come and float calmly off the soft light clouds,
Such as you see in summer, and the winds

Scarce stir the branches. Lodged in sunny cleft,
 Where the cold breezes come not, blooms alone
 The little wind-flower, whose just opened eye
 Is blue as the spring heaven it gazes at —
 Startling the loiterer in the naked groves
 With unexpected beauty, for the time
 Of blossoms and green leaves is yet afar.
 And ere it comes, the encountering winds shall oft
 Muster their wrath again, and rapid clouds
 Shade heaven, and bounding on the frozen earth
 Shall fall their volleyed stores, rounded like hail
 And white like snow, and the loud North again
 Shall buffet the vexed forest in his rage.

O FAIREST OF THE RURAL MAIDS

O fairest of the rural maids !
 Thy birth was in the forest shades ;
 Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
 Were all that met thine infant eye.

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,
 Were ever in the sylvan wild ;
 And all the beauty of the place
 Is in thy heart and on thy face.

The twilight of the trees and rocks
 Is in the light shade of thy locks ;
 Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
 Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
 And silent waters heaven is seen ;
 Their lashes are the herbs that look
 On their young figures in the brook.

The forest depths, by foot unpressed,
 Are not more sinless than thy breast ;
 The holy peace, that fills the air
 Of those calm solitudes, is there.

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN

Thou who wouldest see the lovely and the wild
 Mingled in harmony on Nature's face,

Ascend our rocky mountains. Let thy foot
Fail not with weariness, for on their tops
The beauty and the majesty of earth,
Spread wide beneath, shall make thee to forget
The steep and toilsome way. There, as thou stand'st,
The haunts of men below thee, and around
The mountain-summits, thy expanding heart
Shall feel a kindred with that loftier world
To which thou art translated, and partake
The enlargement of thy vision. Thou shalt look
Upon the green and rolling forest-tops,
And down into the secrets of the glens,
And streams that with their bordering thickets strive
To hide their windings. Thou shalt gaze, at once,
Here on white villages, and tilth, and herds,
And swarming roads, and there on solitudes
That only hear the torrent, and the wind,
And eagle's shriek. There is a precipice
That seems a fragment of some mighty wall,
Built by the hand that fashioned the old world,
To separate its nations, and thrown down
When the flood drowned them. To the north, a path
Conducts you up the narrow battlement.
Steep is the western side, shaggy and wild
With mossy trees, and pinnacles of flint,
And many a hanging crag. But, to the east,
Sheer to the vale go down the bare old cliffs —
Huge pillars, that in middle heaven upbear
Their weather-beaten capitals, here dark
With moss, the growth of centuries, and there
Of chalky whiteness where the thunderbolt
Has splintered them. It is a fearful thing
To stand upon the beetling verge, and see
Where storm and lightning, from that huge gray wall,
Have tumbled down vast blocks, and at the base
Dashed them in fragments, and to lay thine ear
Over the dizzy depth, and hear the sound
Of winds, that struggle with the woods below,
Come up like ocean murmurs. But the scene
Is lovely round; a beautiful river there
Wanders amid the fresh and fertile meads,
The paradise he made unto himself,
Mining the soil for ages. On each side
The fields swell upward to the hills; beyond,
Above the hills, in the blue distance, rise
The mountain-columns with which earth props heaven.

There is a tale about these reverend rocks,
A sad tradition of unhappy love,
And sorrows borne and ended, long ago,
When over these fair vales the savage sought
His game in the thick woods. There was a maid,
The fairest of the Indian maids, bright-eyed,
With wealth of raven tresses, a light form,
And a gay heart. About her cabin-door
The wide old woods resounded with her song
And fairy laughter all the summer day.
She loved her cousin; such a love was deemed,
By the morality of those stern tribes,
Incestuous, and she struggled hard and long
Against her love, and reasoned with her heart,
As simple Indian maiden might. In vain.
Then her eye lost its lustre, and her step
Its lightness, and the gray-haired men that passed
Her dwelling, wondered that they heard no more
The accustomed song and laugh of her, whose looks
Were like the cheerful smile of Spring, they said,
Upon the Winter of their age. She went
To weep where no eye saw, and was not found
Where all the merry girls were met to dance,
And all the hunters of the tribe were out;
Nor when they gathered from the rustling husk
The shining ear; nor when, by the river's side,
They pulled the grape and startled the wild shades
With sounds of mirth. The keen-eyed Indian dames
Would whisper to each other, as they saw
Her wasting form, and say, *The girl will die.*

One day into the bosom of a friend,
A playmate of her young and innocent years,
She poured her griefs. 'Thou know'st, and thou alone,'
She said, 'for I have told thee, all my love,
And guilt, and sorrow. I am sick of life.
All night I weep in darkness, and the morn
Glares on me, as upon a thing accursed,
That has no business on the earth. I hate
The pastimes and the pleasant toils that once
I loved; the cheerful voices of my friends
Sound in my ear like mockings, and, at night,
In dreams, my mother, from the land of souls,
Calls me and chides me. All that look on me
Do seem to know my shame; I cannot bear

Their eyes; I cannot from my heart root out
The love that wrings it so, and I must die.'

It was a summer morning, and they went
To this old precipice. About the cliffs
Lay garlands, ears of maize, and shaggy skins
Of wolf and bear, the offerings of the tribe
Here made to the Great Spirit, for they deemed,
Like worshippers of the elder time, that God
Doth walk on the high places and affect
The earth-o'erlooking mountains. She had on
The ornaments with which her father loved
To deck the beauty of his bright-eyed girl,
And bade her wear when stranger warriors came
To be his guests. Here the friends sat them down,
And sang, all day, old songs of love and death,
And decked the poor wan victim's hair with flowers,
And prayed that safe and swift might be her way
To the calm world of sunshine, where no grief
Makes the heart heavy and the eyelids red.
Beautiful lay the region of her tribe
Below her — waters resting in the embrace
Of the wide forest, and maize-planted glades
Opening amid the leafy wilderness.
She gazed upon it long, and at the sight
Of her own village peeping through the trees,
And her own dwelling, and the cabin roof
Of him she loved with an unlawful love,
And came to die for, a warm gush of tears
Ran from her eyes. But when the sun grew low
And the hill shadows long, she threw herself
From the steep rock and perished. There was scooped,
Upon the mountain's southern slope, a grave;
And there they laid her, in the very garb
With which the maiden decked herself for death,
With the same withering wild-flowers in her hair,
And o'er the mould that covered her, the tribe
Built up a simple monument, a cone
Of small loose stones. Thenceforward all who passed,
Hunter, and dame, and virgin, laid a stone
In silence on the pile. It stands there yet.
And Indians from the distant West, who come
To visit where their fathers' bones are laid,
Yet tell the sorrowful tale, and to this day
The mountain where the hapless maiden died
Is called the Mountain of the Monument.

A FOREST HYMN

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them — ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at least,
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn — thrice happy, if it find
Acceptance in his ear.

Father, thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, Thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun,
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot toward heaven. The century-living crow,
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles, of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show
The boast of our vain race to change the form
Of thy fair works. But Thou art here — Thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds
That run along the summit of these trees
In music; Thou art in the cooler breath
That from the inmost darkness of the place

Comes, scarcely felt ; the barky trunks, the ground,
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with Thee.
Here is continual worship ; — Nature, here,
In the tranquillity that Thou dost love,
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly, around,
From perch to perch, the solitary bird
Passes ; and yon clear spring, that, midst its herbs,
Wells softly forth and wandering steepes the roots
Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left
Thyself without a witness, in the shades,
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and grace
Are here to speak of Thee. This mighty oak —
By whose immovable stem I stand and seem
Almost annihilated — not a prince,
In all that proud old world beyond the deep,
E'er wore his crown as loftily as he
Wears the green coronal of leaves with which
Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his root
Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath and look so like a smile,
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this great universe.

My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on,
In silence, round me — the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
Forever. Written on thy works I read
The lesson of thy own eternity.
Lo ! all grow old and die — but see again,
How on the faltering footsteps of decay
Youth presses — ever gay and beautiful youth
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty trees
Wave not less proudly that their ancestors
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not lost
One of earth's charms : upon her bosom yet,
After the flight of untold centuries,
The freshness of her far beginning lies
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle hate
Of his arch-enemy Death — yea, seats himself
Upon the tyrant's throne — the sepulchre,
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe

Makes his own nourishment. For he came forth
From thine own bosom, and shall have no end.

There have been holy men who hid themselves
Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they outlived
The generation born with them, nor seemed
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks
Around them; — and there have been holy men
Who deemed it were not well to pass life thus.
But let me often to these solitudes
Retire, and in thy presence reassure
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps shrink
And tremble and are still. O God! when Thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,
With all the waters of the firmament,
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,
Uprises the great deep and throws himself
Upon the continent, and overwhelms
Its cities — who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?
Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the wrath
Of the mad unchained elements to teach
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate,
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,
And to the beautiful order of thy works
Learn to conform the order of our lives.

JUNE

I gazed upon the glorious sky
And the green mountains round,
And thought that when I came to lie
At rest within the ground,
'T were pleasant, that in flowery June,
When brooks send up a cheerful tune,
And groves a joyous sound,
The sexton's hand, my grave to make,
The rich, green mountain-turf should break.

A cell within the frozen mould,
A coffin borne through sleet,

And icy clods above it rolled,
While fierce the tempests beat —
Away! — I will not think of these —
Blue be the sky and soft the breeze,
Earth green beneath the feet,
And be the damp mould gently pressed
Into my narrow place of rest.

There through the long, long summer hours,
The golden light should lie,
And thick young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale close beside my cell ;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife bee and humming-bird.

And what if cheerful shouts at noon
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon
With fairy laughter blent ?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothèd lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument ?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know that I no more should see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow ;
But if, around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear
The thought of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
The gladness of the scene ;
Whose part, in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
Is that his grave is green ;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his living voice.

THE PAST

Thou unrelenting Past !
Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,
And fetters, sure and fast,
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.

Far in thy realm withdrawn,
Old empires sit in sullenness and gloom,
And glorious ages gone
Lie deep within the shadow of thy womb.

Childhood, with all its mirth,
Youth, Manhood, Age that draws us to the ground,
And last, Man's Life on earth,
Glide to thy dim dominions, and are bound.

Thou hast my better years ;
Thou hast my earlier friends, the good, the kind,
Yielded to thee with tears —
The venerable form, the exalted mind.

My spirit yearns to bring
The lost ones back — yearns with desire intense,
And struggles hard to wring
Thy bolts apart, and pluck thy captives thence.

In vain ; thy gates deny
All passage save to those who hence depart ;
Nor to the streaming eye
Thou giv'st them back — nor to the broken heart.

In thy abysses hide
Beauty and excellence unknown ; to thee
Earth's wonder and her pride
Are gathered, as the waters to the sea.

Labors of good to man,
Unpublished charity, unbroken faith,
Love, that midst grief began,
And grew with years, and faltered not in death.

Full many a mighty name
Lurks in thy depths, unuttered, unrevered ;
With thee are silent fame,
Forgotten arts, and wisdom disappeared.

Thine for a space are they —
 Yet shalt thou yield thy treasures up at last :
 Thy gates shall yet give way,
 Thy bolts shall fall, inexorable Past !

All that of good and fair
 Has gone into thy womb from earliest time
 Shall then come forth to wear
 The glory and the beauty of its prime.

They have not perished — no !
 Kind words, remembered voices once so sweet,
 Smiles, radiant long ago,
 And features, the great soul's apparent seat.

All shall come back ; each tie
 Of pure affection shall be knit again ;
 Alone shall Evil die,
 And Sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.

And then shall I behold
 Him, by whose kind paternal side I sprung,
 And her, who, still and cold,
 Fills the next grave — the beautiful and young.

THE EVENING WIND

Spirit that breathest through my lattice, thou
 That cool'st the twilight of the sultry day,
 Gratefully flows thy freshness round my brow ;
 Thou hast been out upon the deep at play,
 Riding all day the wild blue waves till now,
 Roughening their crests, and scattering high their spray,
 And swelling the white sail. I welcome thee
 To the scorched land, thou wanderer of the sea !

Nor I alone ; a thousand bosoms round
 Inhale thee in the fulness of delight ;
 And languid forms rise up, and pulses bound
 Livelier, at coming of the wind of night ;
 And, languishing to hear thy grateful sound,
 Lies the vast inland stretched beyond the sight.
 Go forth into the gathering shade ; go forth,
 God's blessing breathed upon the fainting earth !

Go, rock the little wood-bird in his nest,
 Curl the still waters, bright with stars, and rouse
 The wide old wood from his majestic rest,
 Summoning from the innumerable boughs
 The strange, deep harmonies that haunt his breast :
 Pleasant shall be thy way where meekly bows
 The shutting flower, and darkling waters pass,
 And where the o'ershadowing branches sweep the grass.

The faint old man shall lean his silver head
 To feel thee ; thou shalt kiss the child asleep,
 And dry the moistened curls that overspread
 His temples, while his breathing grows more deep ;
 And they who stand about the sick man's bed,
 Shall joy to listen to thy distant sweep,
 And softly part his curtains to allow
 Thy visit, grateful to his burning brow.

Go — but the circle of eternal change,
 Which is the life of Nature, shall restore,
 With sounds and scents from all thy mighty range,
 Thee to thy birthplace of the deep once more ;
 Sweet odors in the sea-air, sweet and strange,
 Shall tell the home-sick mariner of the shore ;
 And, listening to thy murmur, he shall deem
 He hears the rustling leaf and running stream.

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
 And colored with the heaven's own blue,
 That openest when the quiet light
 Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean
 O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
 Or columbines, in purple dressed,
 Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
 When woods are bare and birds are flown,
 And frosts and shortening days portend
 The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
 Look through its fringes to the sky,

Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

HYMN OF THE CITY

Not in the solitude
Alone may man commune with Heaven, or see,
Only in savage wood
And sunny vale, the present Deity ;
Or only hear his voice
Where the winds whisper and the waves rejoice.

Even here do I behold
Thy steps, Almighty ! — here, amidst the crowd
Through the great city rolled,
With everlasting murmur deep and loud —
Choking the ways that wind
'Mongst the proud piles, the work of human kind.

Thy golden sunshine comes
From the round heaven, and on their dwellings lies
And lights their inner homes ;
For them Thou fill'st with air the unbounded skies,
And givest them the stores
Of ocean, and the harvests of its shores.

Thy Spirit is around,
Quicken the restless mass that sweeps along ;
And this eternal sound —
Voices and footfalls of the numberless throng —
Like the resounding sea,
Or like the rainy tempest, speaks of Thee.

And when the hour of rest
Comes, like a calm upon the mid-sea brine,
Hushing its billowy breast —
The quiet of that moment too is thine ;
It breathes of Him who keeps
The vast and helpless city while it sleeps.

SONG OF MARION'S MEN

Our band is few but true and tried,
 Our leader frank and bold ;
The British soldier trembles
 When Marion's name is told.
Our fortress is the good greenwood,
 Our tent the cypress-tree ;
We know the forest round us,
 As seamen know the sea.
We know its walls of thorny vines,
 Its glades of reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands
 Within the dark morass.

Woe to the English soldiery
 That little dread us near !
On them shall light at midnight
 A strange and sudden fear :
When, waking to their tents on fire,
 They grasp their arms in vain,
And they who stand to face us
 Are beat to earth again ;
And they who fly in terror deem
 A mighty host behind,
And hear the tramp of thousands
 Upon the hollow wind.

Then sweet the hour that brings release
 From danger and from toil :
We talk the battle over,
 And share the battle's spoil.
The woodland rings with laugh and shout,
 As if a hunt were up,
And woodland flowers are gathered
 To crown the soldier's cup.
With merry songs we mock the wind
 That in the pine-top grieves,
And slumber long and sweetly
 On beds of oaken leaves.

Well knows the fair and friendly moon
 The band that Marion leads —
The glitter of their rifles,
 The scampering of their steeds.

'T is life to guide the fiery barb
 Across the moonlight plain ;
'T is life to feel the night-wind
 That lifts the tossing mane.
A moment in the British camp —
 A moment — and away
Back to the pathless forest,
 Before the peep of day.

Grave men there are by broad Santee,
 Grave men with hoary hairs ;
Their hearts are all with Marion,
 For Marion are their prayers.
And lovely ladies greet our band
 With kindliest welcoming,
With smiles like those of summer,
 And tears like those of spring.
For them we wear these trusty arms,
 And lay them down no more
Till we have driven the Briton,
 Forever, from our shore.

THE PRAIRIES

These are the gardens of the Desert, these
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name —
The Prairies. I behold them for the first,
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight
Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo ! they stretch,
In airy undulations, far away,
As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,
Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed,
And motionless forever. — Motionless ? —
No — they are all unchained again. The clouds
Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye ;
Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South !
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not — ye have played
Among the palms of Mexico and vines
Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks
That from the fountains of Sonora glide
Into the calm Pacific — have ye fanned

A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?
Man hath no power in all this glorious work :
The hand that built the firmament hath heaved
And smoothed these verdant swells, and sown their slopes
With herbage, planted them with island groves,
And hedged them round with forests. Fitting floor
For this magnificent temple of the sky —
With flowers whose glory and whose multitude
Rival the constellations ! The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love, —
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,
Than that which bends above our eastern hills.

As o'er the verdant waste I guide my steed,
Among the high rank grass that sweeps his sides
The hollow beating of his footstep seems
A sacrilegious sound. I think of those
Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they here —
The dead of other days? — and did the dust
Of these fair solitudes once stir with life
And burn with passion ? Let the mighty mounds
That overlook the rivers, or that rise
In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,
Answer. A race, that long has passed away,
Built them ; — a disciplined and populous race
Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet the Greek
Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms
Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock
The glittering Parthenon. These ample fields
Nourished their harvests, here their herds were fed,
When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,
And bowed his manèd shoulder to the yoke.
All day this desert murmured with their toils,
Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and wooed
In a forgotten language, and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered form,
Gave the soft winds a voice. The red man came —
The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and fierce,
And the mound-builders vanished from the earth.
The solitude of centuries untold
Has settled where they dwelt. The prairie-wolf
Hunts in their meadows, and his fresh-dug den
Yawns by my path. The gopher mines the ground
Where stood their swarming cities. All is gone ;
All — save the piles of earth that hold their bones,
The platforms where they worshipped unknown gods,

The barriers which they builded from the soil
To keep the foe at bay — till o'er the walls
The wild beleaguerers broke, and, one by one,
The strongholds of the plain were forced, and heaped
With corpses. The brown vultures of the wood
Flocked to those vast uncovered sepulchres,
And sat unscared and silent at their feast.
Haply some solitary fugitive,
Lurking in marsh and forest, till the sense
Of desolation and of fear became
Bitterer than death, yielded himself to die.
Man's better nature triumphed then. Kind words
Welcomed and soothed him; the rude conquerors
Seated the captive with their chiefs; he chose
A bride among their maidens, and at length
Seemed to forget — yet ne'er forgot — the wife
Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,
Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his race.

Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise
Races of living things, glorious in strength,
And perish, as the quickening breath of God
Fills them, or is withdrawn. The red man, too,
Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so long,
And, nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought
A wilder hunting-ground. The beaver builds
No longer by these streams, but far away,
On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave back
The white man's face — among Missouri's springs,
And pools whose issues swell the Oregon —
He rears his little Venice. In these plains
The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty leagues
Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,
Roams the majestic brute, in herds that shake
The earth with thundering steps — yet here I meet
His ancient footprints stamped beside the pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.
Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers
They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds,
And birds, that scarce have learned the fear of man,
Are here, and sliding reptiles of the ground,
Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer
Bounds to the wood at my approach. The bee,
A more adventurous colonist than man,
With whom he came across the eastern deep,

Fills the savannas with his murmurings,
And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,
Within the hollow oak. I listen long
To his domestic hum, and think I hear
The sound of that advancing multitude
Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the ground
Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
Over the dark brown furrows. All at once
A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my dream,
And I am in the wilderness alone.

THE FLOOD OF YEARS

A mighty Hand, from an exhaustless Urn,
Pours forth the never-ending Flood of Years,
Among the nations. How the rushing waves
Bear all before them! On their foremost edge,
And there alone, is Life. The Present there
Tosses and foams, and fills the air with roar
Of mingled noises. There are they who toil,
And they who strive, and they who feast, and they
Who hurry to and fro. The sturdy swain —
Woodman and delver with the spade — is there,
And busy artisan beside his bench,
And pallid student with his written roll.
A moment on the mounting billow seen,
The flood sweeps over them and they are gone.
There groups of revellers whose brows are twined
With roses, ride the topmost swell awhile,
And as they raise their flowing cups and touch
The clinking brim to brim, are whirled beneath
The waves and disappear. I hear the jar
Of beaten drums, and thunders that break forth
From cannon, where the advancing billow sends
Up to the sight long files of armèd men,
That hurry to the charge through flame and smoke.
The torrent bears them under, whelmed and hid
Slayer and slain, in heaps of bloody foam.
Down go the steed and rider, the plumed chief
Sinks with his followers; the head that wears
The imperial diadem goes down beside
The felon's with cropped ear and branded cheek.
A funeral-train — the torrent sweeps away

Bearers and bier and mourners. By the bed
Of one who dies men gather sorrowing,
And women weep aloud; the flood rolls on;
The wail is stifled and the sobbing group
Borne under. Hark to that shrill, sudden shout,
The cry of an applauding multitude,
Swayed by some loud-voiced orator who wields
The living mass as if he were its soul!
The waters choke the shout and all is still.
Lo! next a kneeling crowd, and one who spreads
The hands in prayer — the engulfing wave o'er takes
And swallows them and him. A sculptor wields
The chisel, and the stricken marble grows
To beauty; at his easel, eager-eyed,
A painter stands, and sunshine at his touch
Gathers upon his canvas, and life glows;
A poet, as he paces to and fro,
Murmurs his sounding lines. Awhile they ride
The advancing billow, till its tossing crest
Strikes them and flings them under, while their tasks
Are yet unfinished. See a mother smile
On her young babe that smiles to her again;
The torrent wrests it from her arms; she shrieks
And weeps, and midst her tears is carried down.
A beam like that of moonlight turns the spray
To glistening pearls; two lovers, hand in hand,
Rise on the billowy swell and fondly look
Into each other's eyes. The rushing flood
Flings them apart: the youth goes down; the maid
With hands outstretched in vain, and streaming eyes,
Waits for the next high wave to follow him.
An aged man succeeds; his bending form
Sinks slowly. Mingling with the sullen stream
Gleam the white locks, and then are seen no more.

Lo! wider grows the stream — a sea-like flood
Saps earth's walled cities; massive palaces
Crumble before it; fortresses and towers
Dissolve in the swift waters; populous realms
Swept by the torrent see their ancient tribes
Engulfed and lost; their very languages
Stifled, and never to be uttered more.

I pause and turn my eyes, and looking back
Where that tumultuous flood has been, I see
The silent ocean of the Past, a waste
Of waters weltering over graves, its shores
Strewn with the wreck of fleets where mast and hull

Drop away piecemeal; battlemented walls
Frown idly, green with moss, and temples stand
Unroofed, forsaken by the worshipper.
There lie memorial stones, whence time has gnawed
The graven legends, thrones of kings o'erturned,
The broken altars of forgotten gods,
Foundations of old cities and long streets
Where never fall of human foot is heard,
On all the desolate pavement. I behold
Dim glimmerings of lost jewels, far within
The sleeping waters, diamond, sardonyx,
Ruby and topaz, pearl and chrysolite,
Once glittering at the banquet on fair brows
That long ago were dust, and all around
Strewn on the surface of that silent sea
Are withering bridal wreaths, and glossy locks
Shorn from dear brows, by loving hands, and scrolls
O'erwritten, haply with fond words of love
And vows of friendship, and fair pages flung
Fresh from the printer's engine. There they lie
A moment, and then sink away from sight.

I look, and the quick tears are in my eyes,
For I behold in every one of these
A blighted hope, a separate history
Of human sorrows, telling of dear ties
Suddenly broken, dreams of happiness
Dissolved in air, and happy days too brief
That sorrowfully ended, and I think
How painfully must the poor heart have beat
In bosoms without number, as the blow
Was struck that slew their hope and broke their peace.

Sadly I turn and look before, where yet
The Flood must pass, and I behold a mist
Where swarm dissolving forms, the brood of Hope,
Divinely fair, that rest on banks of flowers,
Or wander among rainbows, fading soon
And reappearing, haply giving place
To forms of grisly aspect such as Fear
Shapes from the idle air — where serpents lift
The head to strike, and skeletons stretch forth
The bony arm in menace. Further on
A belt of darkness seems to bar the way,
Long, low, and distant, where the Life to come
Touches the Life that is. The Flood of Years
Rolls toward it near and nearer. It must pass
That dismal barrier. What is there beyond?

Hear what the wise and good have said. Beyond
 That belt of darkness, still the Years roll on
 More gently, but with not less mighty sweep.
 They gather up again and softly bear
 All the sweet lives that late were overwhelmed
 And lost to sight, all that in them was good,
 Noble, and truly great, and worthy of love —
 The lives of infants and ingenuous youths,
 Sages and saintly women who have made
 Their households happy; all are raised and borne
 By that great current in its onward sweep,
 Wandering and rippling with caressing waves
 Around green islands with the breath
 Of flowers that never wither. So they pass
 From stage to stage along the shining course
 Of that bright river, broadening like a sea
 As its smooth eddies curl along their way.
 They bring old friends together; hands are clasped
 In joy unspeakable; the mother's arms
 Again are folded round the child she loved
 And lost. Old sorrows are forgotten now,
 Or but remembered to make sweet the hour
 That overpays them; wounded hearts that bled
 Or broke are healed forever. In the room
 Of this grief-shadowed present, there shall be
 A Present in whose reign no grief shall gnaw
 The heart, and never shall a tender tie
 Be broken; in whose reign the eternal Change
 That waits on growth and action shall proceed
 With everlasting Concord hand in hand.

Edward Coote Pinkney [1802-1828]

SONG

We break the glass, whose sacred wine
 To some beloved health we drain,
 Lest future pledges, less divine,
 Should e'er the hallowed toy profane;
 And thus I broke a heart, that poured
 Its tide of feelings out to thee,
 In draughts, by after-times deplored,
 Yet dear to memory.

But still the old empassioned ways
 And habits of my mind remain,

And still unhappy light displays
 Thine image chambered in my brain,
 And still it looks as when the hours
 Went by like flights of singing birds,
 Or that soft chain of spoken flowers,
 And airy gems, thy words.

ELYSIUM

She dwelleth in Elysium ; there,
 Like Echo, floating in the air ;
 Feeding on light as feed the flowers,
 She fleets away uncounted hours,
 Where halcyon Peace, among the blest,
 Sits brooding o'er her tranquil nest.

She needs no impulse ; one she is,
 Whom thought supplies with ample bliss :
 The fancies fashioned in her mind
 By heaven, are after its own kind ;
 Like sky-reflections in a lake,
 Whose calm no winds occur to break.

Her memory is purified,
 And she seems never to have sighed :
 She hath forgot the way to weep,
 Her being is a joyous sleep ;
 The mere imagining of pain,
 Hath passed, and cannot come again.

Except of pleasure most intense
 And constant, she hath lost all sense ;
 Her life is day without a night,
 An endless, innocent delight ;
 No chance her happiness now mars,
 Howe'er Fate twine *her* wreaths of stars.

And palpable and pure, the part,
 Which pleasure playeth with her heart ;
 For every joy that seeks the maid,
 Foregoes its common painful shade,
 Like shapes that issue from the grove,
 Arcadian, dedicate to Jove.

SERENADE

Look out upon the stars, my love,
 And shame them with thine eyes,
 On which, than on the lights above,
 There hang more destinies.
 Night's beauty is the harmony
 Of blending shades and light ;
 Then, Lady, up, — look out, and be
 A sister to the night ! —

Sleep not ! — thine image wakes for aye,
 Within my watching breast :
 Sleep not ! — from her soft sleep should fly,
 Who robs all hearts of rest.
 Nay, Lady, from thy slumbers break,
 And make this darkness gay,
 With looks, whose brightness well might make
 Of darker nights a day.

A HEALTH

I fill this cup to one made up of loveliness alone,
 A woman, of her gentle sex the seeming paragon ;
 To whom the better elements and kindly stars have given,
 A form so fair, that, like the air, 't is less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own, like those of morning birds,
 And something more than melody dwells ever in her words ;
 The coinage of her heart are they, and from her lips each flows
 As one may see the burthened bee forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her, the measures of her hours ;
 Her feelings have the fragrancy, the freshness, of young flowers ;
 And lovely passions, changing oft, so fill her, she appears
 The image of themselves by turns, — the idol of past years !

Of her bright face one glance will trace a picture on the brain,
 And of her voice in echoing hearts a sound must long remain,
 But memory such as mine of her so very much endears,
 When death is nigh my latest sigh will not be life's but hers.

I filled this cup to one made up of loveliness alone,
 A woman, of her gentle sex the seeming paragon —
 Her health ! and would on earth there stood some more of such a
 frame,
 That life might be all poetry, and weariness a name.

SONG

Day departs this upper air,
 My lively, lovely lady ;
 And the eve-star sparkles fair,
 And our good steeds are ready.
 Leave, leave these loveless halls,
 So lordly though they be ; —
 Come, come — affection calls —
 Away at once with me !

Sweet thy words in sense as sound,
 And gladly do I hear them ;
 Though thy kinsmen are around,
 And tamer bosoms fear them.
 Mount, mount, — I 'll keep thee, dear,
 In safety as we ride ; —
 On, on — my heart is here,
 My sword is at my side !

THE WIDOW'S SONG

I burn no incense, hang no wreath,
 On this, thine early tomb :
 Such cannot cheer the place of death,
 But only mock its gloom.
 Here odorous smoke and breathing flower
 No grateful influence shed ;
 They lose their perfume and their power,
 When offered to the dead.

And if, as is the Afghaun's creed,
 The spirit may return,
 A disembodied sense to feed,
 On fragrance, near its urn —
 It is enough, that she, whom thou
 Did'st love in living years,
 Sits desolate beside it now,
 And falls these heavy tears.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

THOUGHT

I am not poor, but I am proud,
 Of one inalienable right,
 Above the envy of the crowd,—
 Thought's holy light.

Better it is than gems or gold,
 And oh! it cannot die,
 But thought will glow when the sun grows cold,
 And mix with Deity.

TO ELLEN

And Ellen, when the graybeard years
 Have brought us to life's evening hour,
 And all the crowded Past appears
 A tiny scene of sun and shower,

Then, if I read the page aright
 Where Hope, the soothsayer, reads our lot,
 Thyself shalt own the page was bright,
 Well that we loved, woe had we not,

When Mirth is dumb and Flattery 's fled,
 And mute thy music's dearest tone,
 When all but Love itself is dead
 And all but deathless Reason gone.

THINE EYES STILL SHINED

Thine eyes still shined for me, though far
 I lonely roved the land or sea:
 As I behold yon evening star,
 Which yet beholds not me.

This morn I climbed the misty hill
 And roamed the pastures through;
 How danced thy form before my path
 Amidst the deep-eyed dew!

When the redbird spread his sable wing,
 And showed his side of flame;
 When the rosebud ripened to the rose,
 In both I read thy name.

THE RHODORA:

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
 I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
 Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
 To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
 The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
 Made the black water with their beauty gay ;
 Here might the redbird come his plumes to cool,
 And court the flower that cheapens his array.
 Rhodora ! if the sages ask thee why
 This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
 Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
 Then Beauty is its own excuse for being :
 Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose !
 I never thought to ask, I never knew :
 But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
 The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

EACH AND ALL

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
 Of thee from the hill-top looking down ;
 The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
 Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm ;
 The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
 Deems not that great Napoleon
 Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
 Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height ;
 Nor knowest thou what argument
 Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
 All are needed by each one ;
 Nothing is fair or good alone.
 I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
 Singing at dawn on the alder bough ;
 I brought him home, in his nest, at even ;
 He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
 For I did not bring home the river and sky ; —
 He sang to my ear, — they sang to my eye.
 The delicate shells lay on the shore ;
 The bubbles of the latest wave
 Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
 And the bellowing of the savage sea
 Greeted their safe escape to me.
 I wiped away the weeds and foam,

I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage; —
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, 'I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth: ' —
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird; —
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

CONCORD HYMN

Sung at the completion of the Battle Monument,
July 4, 1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
 To die, and leave their children free,
 Bid Time and Nature gently spare
 The shaft we raise to them and thee.

THE HUMBLE-BEE

Burly, dozing humble-bee,
 Where thou art is clime for me.
 Let them sail for Porto Rique,
 Far-off heats through seas to seek ;
 I will follow thee alone,
 Thou animated torrid-zone !
 Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
 Let me chase thy waving lines ;
 Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
 Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
 Joy of thy dominion !
 Sailor of the atmosphere ;
 Swimmer through the waves of air ;
 Voyager of light and noon ;
 Epicurean of June ;
 Wait, I prithee, till I come
 Within earshot of thy hum, —
 All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
 With a net of shining haze
 Silvers the horizon wall,
 And with softness touching all,
 Tints the human countenance
 With a color of romance,
 And infusing subtle heats,
 Turns the sod to violets,
 Thou, in sunny solitudes,
 Rover of the underwoods,
 The green silence dost displace
 With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
 Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
 Tells of countless sunny hours,
 Long days, and solid banks of flowers ;
 Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
 In Indian wildernesses found ;

Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen ;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodels,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue
And brier-roses, dwelt among ;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher !
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep ;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep ;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

URIEL

It fell in the ancient periods
Which the brooding soul surveys,
Or ever the wild Time coined itself
Into calendar months and days.

This was the lapse of Uriel
Which in Paradise befell.
Once, among the Pleiads walking,
Seyd overheard the young gods talking ;
And the treason, too long pent,
To his ears was evident.
The young deities discussed
Laws of form, and metre just,
Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,
What subsisteth and what seems.
One, with low tones that decide,

And doubt and reverend use defied,
 With a look that solved the sphere,
 And stirred the devils everywhere,
 Gave his sentiment divine
 Against the being of a line.
 'Line in nature is not found ;
 Unit and universe are round ;
 In vain produced, all rays return ;
 Evil will bless, and ice will burn.'
 As Uriel spoke with piercing eye,
 A shudder ran around the sky ;
 The stern old war-gods shook their heads,
 The seraphs frowned from myrtle-beds ;
 Seemed to the holy festival
 The rash word boded ill to all ;
 The balance-beam of Fate was bent ;
 The bounds of good and ill were rent ;
 Strong Hades could not keep his own,
 But all slid to confusion.

A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell
 On the beauty of Uriel ;
 In heaven once eminent, the god
 Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud ;
 Whether doomed to long gyration
 In the sea of generation,
 Or by knowledge grown too bright
 To hit the nerve of feebler sight.
 Straightway, a forgetting wind
 Stole over the celestial kind,
 And their lips the secret kept,
 If in ashes the fire-seed slept.
 But now and then, truth-speaking things
 Shamed the angels' veiling wings ;
 And, shrilling from the solar course,
 Or from fruit of chemic force,
 Procession of a soul in matter,
 Or the speeding change of water,
 Or out of the good of evil born,
 Came Uriel's voice of cherub scorn,
 And a blush tinged the upper sky,
 And the gods shook, they knew not why.

THE PROBLEM

I like a church ; I like a cowl ;
 I love a prophet of the soul ;

And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles ;
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowlèd churchman be.
Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure ?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought ;
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle ;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old ;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below, —
The canticles of love and woe :
The hand that rounded Peter's dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
Wrought in a sad sincerity :
Himself from God he could not free ;
He builded better than he knew ; —
The conscious stone to beauty grew.
Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast ?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn her annual cell ?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads ?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,
And Morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids ;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye ;
For out of Thought's interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air ;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.
These temples grew as grows the grass ;
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand

To the vast soul that o'er him planned ;
 And the same power that reared the shrine
 Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
 Ever the fiery Pentecost
 Girds with one flame the countless host,
 Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
 And through the priest the mind inspires.
 The word unto the prophet spoken
 Was writ on tables yet unbroken ;
 The word by seers or sibyls told,
 In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
 Still floats upon the morning wind,
 Still whispers to the willing mind.
 One accent of the Holy Ghost
 The heedless world hath never lost.
 I know what say the fathers wise,
 The Book itself before me lies,
 Old *Chrysostom*, best Augustine,
 And he who blent both in his line,
 The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
 Taylor, the Shakspeare of divines.
 His words are music in my ear,
 I see his cowlèd portrait dear ;
 And yet, for all his faith could see,
 I would not the good bishop be.

WOOD NOTES

I

1

When the pine tosses its cones
 To the song of its waterfall tones,
 Who speeds to the woodland walks ?
 To birds and trees who talks ?
 Cæsar of his leafy Rome,
 There the poet is at home.—
 He goes to the river-side, —
 Not hook nor line hath he ;
 He stands in the meadows wide, —
 Nor gun nor scythe to see.
 Sure some god his eye enchantas :
 What he knows nobody wants.
 In the wood he travels glad,
 Without better fortune had,
 Melancholy without bad.
 Knowledge this man prizes best

Seems fantastic to the rest :
Pondering shadows, colors, clouds,
Grass-buds and caterpillar-shrouds,
Boughs on which the wild bees settle,
Tints that spot the violet's petal,
Why Nature loves the number five,
And why the star-form she repeats :
Lover of all things alive,
Wonderer at all he meets,
Wonderer chiefly at himself,
Who can tell him what he is ?
Or how meet in human elf
Coming and past eternities ?

2

And such I knew, a forest seer,
A minstrel of the natural year,
Foreteller of the vernal ides,
Wise harbinger of spheres and tides,
A lover true, who knew by heart
Each joy the mountain dales impart ;
It seemed that Nature could not raise
A plant in any secret place,
In quaking bog, on snowy hill,
Beneath the grass that shades the rill,
Under the snow, between the rocks,
In damp fields known to bird and fox,
But he would come in the very hour
It opened in its virgin bower,
As if a sunbeam showed the place,
And tell its long-descended race.
It seemed as if the breezes brought him,
It seemed as if the sparrows taught him ;
As if by secret sight he knew
Where, in far fields, the orchis grew.
Many haps fall in the field
Seldom seen by wishful eyes,
But all her shows did Nature yield,
To please and win this pilgrim wise.
He saw the partridge drum in the woods ;
He heard the woodcock's evening hymn ;
He found the tawny thrushes' broods ;
And the shy hawk did wait for him ;
What others did at distance hear,
And guessed within the thicket's gloom,
Was shown to this philosopher,
And at his bidding seemed to come.

In unploughed Maine he sought the lumberers' gang
 Where from a hundred lakes young rivers sprang ;
 He trode the unplanted forest floor, whereon
 The all-seeing sun for ages hath not shone ;
 Where feeds the moose, and walks the surly bear,
 And up the tall mast runs the woodpecker.
 He saw beneath dim aisles, in odorous beds,
 The slight Linnæa hang its twin-born heads,
 And blessed the monument of the man of flowers,
 Which breathes his sweet fame through the northern bowers.
 He heard, when in the grove, at intervals,
 With sudden roar the aged pine-tree falls, —
 One crash, the death-hymn of the perfect tree,
 Declares the close of its green century.
 Low lies the plant to whose creation went
 Sweet influence from every element ;
 Whose living towers the years conspired to build,
 Whose giddy top the morning loved to gild.
 Through these green tents, by eldest Nature dressed,
 He roamed, content alike with man and beast.
 Where darkness found him he lay glad at night ;
 There the red morning touched him with its light.
 Three months his great heart him a hermit made,
 So long he roved at will the boundless shade.
 The timid it concerns to ask their way,
 And fear what foe in caves and swamps can stray,
 To make no step until the event is known,
 And ills to come as evils past bemoan.
 Not so the wise ; no coward watch he keeps
 To spy what danger on his pathway creeps ;
 Go where he will, the wise man is at home,
 His hearth the earth, — his hall the azure dome ;
 Where his clear spirit leads him, there 's his road
 By God's own light illumined and foreshowed.

'T was one of the charmèd days
 When the genius of God doth flow ;
 The wind may alter twenty ways,
 A tempest cannot blow ;
 It may blow north, it still is warm ;
 Or south, it still is clear ;
 Or east, it smells like a clover-farm ;
 Or west, no thunder fear.
 The musing peasant, lowly great,

Beside the forest water sate ;
The rope-like pine-roots crosswise grown
Composed the network of his throne ;
The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,
Was burnished to a floor of glass,
Painted with shadows green and proud
Of the tree and of the cloud.
He was the heart of all the scene ;
On him the sun looked more serene ;
To hill and cloud his face was known, —
It seemed the likeness of their own ;
They knew by secret sympathy
The public child of earth and sky.
'You ask,' he said, 'what guide
Me through trackless thickets led,
Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough and wide.
I found the water's bed.
The watercourses were my guide ;
I travelled grateful by their side,
Or through their channel dry ;
They led me through the thicket damp,
Through brake and fern, the beavers' camp,
Through beds of granite cut my road,
And their resistless friendship showed.
The falling waters led me,
The foodful waters fed me,
And brought me to the lowest land,
Unerring to the ocean sand.
The moss upon the forest bark
Was pole-star when the night was dark ;
The purple berries in the wood
Supplied me necessary food ;
For Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness.
When the forest shall mislead me,
When the night and morning lie,
When sea and land refuse to feed me,
'T will be time enough to die ;
Then will yet my mother yield
A pillow in her greenest field,
Nor the June flowers scorn to cover
The clay of their departed lover.'

WOOD NOTES

II

*As sunbeams stream through liberal space
And nothing jostle or displace,
So waved the pine-tree through my thought
And fanned the dreams it never brought.*

‘Whether is better, the gift or the donor?
Come to me,’
Quoth the pine-tree,
‘I am the giver of honor.
My garden is the cloven rock,
And my manure the snow;
And drifting sand-heaps feed my stock,
In summer’s scorching glow.
He is great who can live by me :
The rough and bearded forester
Is better than the lord ;
God fills the scrip and canister,
Sin piles the loaded board.
The lord is the peasant that was,
The peasant the lord that shall be ;
The lord is hay, the peasant grass,
One dry, and one the living tree.
Who liveth by the ragged pine
Foundeth a heroic line ;
Who liveth in the palace hall
Waneth fast and spendeth all.
He goes to my savage haunts,
With his chariot and his care ;
My twilight realm he disenchants,
And finds his prison there.

What prizes the town and the tower?
Only what the pine-tree yields ;
Sinew that subdued the fields ;
The wild-eyed boy, who in the woods
Chants his hymn to hills and floods,
Whom the city’s poisoning spleen
Made not pale, or fat, or lean ;
Whom the rain and the wind purgeth,
Whom the dawn and the day-star urgeth,
In whose cheek the rose-leaf blusheth,
In whose feet the lion rusheth
Iron arms, and iron mould,
That know not fear, fatigue, or cold.

I give my rafters to his boat,
My billets to his boiler's throat,
And I will swim the ancient sea
To float my child to victory,
And grant to dwellers with the pine
Dominion o'er the palm and vine.
Who leaves the pine-tree, leaves his friend,
Unnerves his strength, invites his end.
Cut a bough from my parent stem,
And dip it in thy porcelain vase ;
A little while each russet gem
Will swell and rise with wonted grace ;
But when it seeks enlarged supplies,
The orphan of the forest dies.
Whoso walks in solitude
And inhabiteth the wood,
Choosing light, wave, rock and bird,
Before the money-loving herd,
Into that forester shall pass,
From these companions, power and grace.
Clean shall he be, without, within,
From the old adhering sin,
All ill dissolving in the light
Of his triumphant piercing sight :
Not vain, sour, nor frivolous ;
Not mad, athirst, nor garrulous ;
Grave, chaste, contented, though retired,
And of all other men desired.
On him the light of star and moon
Shall fall with purer radiance down ;
All constellations of the sky
Shed their virtue through his eye.
Him Nature giveth for defence
His formidable innocence ;
The mountain sap, the shells, the sea,
All spheres, all stones, his helpers be ;
He shall meet the speeding year,
Without wailing, without fear ;
He shall be happy in his love,
Like to like shall joyful prove ;
He shall be happy whilst he wooes.
Muse-born, a daughter of the Muse.
But if with gold she bind her hair,
And deck her breast with diamond,
Take off thine eyes, thy heart forbear,
Though thou lie alone on the ground.

'Heed the old oracles,
 Ponder my spells ;
 Song wakes in my pinnacles
 When the wind swells.
 Soundeth the prophetic wind,
 The shadows shake on the rock behind,
 And the countless leaves of the pine are strings
 Tuned to the lay the wood-god sings.

Hearken ! Hearken !
 If thou wouldest know the mystic song
 Chanted when the sphere was young.
 Aloft, abroad, the pæan swells ;
 O wise man ! hear'st thou half it tells ?
 O wise man ! hear'st thou the least part ?
 'T is the chronicle of art.
 To the open ear it sings
 Sweet the genesis of things,
 Of tendency through endless ages,
 Of star-dust, and star-pilgrimages,
 Of rounded worlds, of space and time,
 Of the old flood's subsiding slime,
 Of chemic matter, force and form,
 Of poles and powers, cold, wet, and warm :
 The rushing metamorphosis
 Dissolving all that fixture is,
 Melts things that be to things that seem,
 And solid nature to a dream.
 O, listen to the undersong,
 The ever old, the ever young ;
 And, far within those cadent pauses,
 The chorus of the ancient Causes !
 Delights the dreadful Destiny
 To fling his voice into the tree,
 And shock thy weak ear with a note
 Breathed from the everlasting throat.
 In music he repeats the pang
 Whence the fair flock of Nature sprang.
 O mortal ! thy ears are stones ;
 These echoes are laden with tones
 Which only the pure can hear ;
 Thou canst not catch what they recite
 Of Fate and Will, of Want and Right,
 Of man to come, of human life,
 Of Death and Fortune, Growth and Strife.'

Once again the pine-tree sung :—
 'Speak not thy speech my boughs among :

Put off thy years, wash in the breeze;
 My hours are peaceful centuries.
 Talk no more with feeble tongue;
 No more the fool of space and time,
 Come weave with mine a nobler rhyme.
 Only thy Americans
 Can read thy line, can meet thy glance,
 But the runes that I rehearse
 Understands the universe;
 The least breath my boughs which tossed
 Brings again the Pentecost;
 To every soul resounding clear
 In a voice of solemn cheer,—
 “Am I not thine? Are not these thine?”
 And they reply, “Forever mine!”
 My branches speak Italian,
 English, German, Basque, Castilian,
 Mountain speech to Highlanders,
 Ocean tongues to islanders,
 To Fin and Lap and swart Malay,
 To each his bosom-secret say.

‘Come learn with me the fatal song
 Which knits the world in music strong,
 Come lift thine eyes to lofty rhymes,
 Of things with things, of times with times,
 Primal chimes of sun and shade,
 Of sound and echo, man and maid,
 The land reflected in the flood,
 Body with shadow still pursued.
 For Nature beats in perfect tune,
 And rounds with rhyme her every rune,
 Whether she work in land or sea,
 Or hide underground her alchemy.
 Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
 Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
 But it carves the bow of beauty there,
 And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake.
 The wood is wiser far than thou;
 The wood and wave each other know
 Not unrelated, unaffied,
 But to each thought and thing allied,
 Is perfect Nature’s every part,
 Rooted in the mighty Heart.
 But thou, poor child! unbound, unrhymed,
 Whence camest thou, misplaced, mistimed,

Whence, O thou orphan and defrauded?
Is thy land peeled, thy realm marauded?
Who thee divorced, deceived and left?
Thee of thy faith who hath bereft,
And torn the ensigns from thy brow,
And sunk the immortal eye so low?
Thy cheek too white, thy form too slender,
Thy gait too slow, thy habits tender
For royal man; — they thee confess
An exile from the wilderness, —
The hills where health with health agrees,
And the wise soul expels disease.
Hark! in thy ear I will tell the sign
By which thy hurt thou may'st divine.
When thou shalt climb the mountain cliff,
Or see the wide shore from my skiff,
To thee the horizon shall express
But emptiness on emptiness;
There lives no man of Nature's worth
In the circle of the earth;
And to thine eye the vast skies fall,
Dire and satirical,
On clucking hens and prating fools,
On thieves, on drudges and on dolls.
And thou shalt say to the Most High,
“Godhead! all this astronomy,
And fate and practice and invention,
Strong art and beautiful pretension,
This radiant pomp of sun and star,
Throes that were, and worlds that are,
Behold! were in vain and in vain; —
It cannot be, — I will look again.
Surely now will the curtain rise,
And earth's fit tenant me surprise; —
But the curtain doth *not* rise,
And Nature has miscarried wholly
Into failure, into folly.”

‘Alas! thine is the bankruptcy,
Blessed Nature so to see.
Come, lay thee in my soothing shade,
And heal the hurts which sin has made.
I see thee in the crowd alone;
I will be thy companion.
Quit thy friends as the dead in doom,
And build to them a final tomb;

Let the starred shade that nightly falls
Still celebrate their funerals,
And the bell of beetle and of bee
Knell their melodious memory.
Behind thee leave thy merchandise,
Thy churches and thy charities ;
And leave thy peacock wit behind ;
Enough for thee the primal mind
That flows in streams, that breathes in wind :
Leave all thy pedant lore apart ;
God hid the whole world in thy heart.
Love shuns the sage, the child it crowns,
Gives all to them who all renounce.
The rain comes when the wind calls ;
The river knows the way to the sea ;
Without a pilot it runs and falls,
Blessing all lands with its charity ;
The sea tosses and foams to find
Its way up to the cloud and wind ;
The shadow sits close to the flying ball ;
The date fails not on the palm-tree tall ;
And thou, — go burn thy wormy pages, —
Shalt outsee seers, and outwit sages.
Oft didst thou thread the woods in vain
To find what bird had piped the strain : —
Seek not, and the little eremite
Flies gayly forth and sings in sight.

'Hearken once more !
I will tell thee the mundane lore.
Older am I than thy numbers wot,
Change I may, but I pass not.
Hitherto all things fast abide,
And anchored in the tempest ride.
Trenchant time behoves to hurry
All to yean and all to bury :
All the forms are fugitive,
But the substances survive.
Ever fresh the broad creation,
A divine improvisation,
From the heart of God proceeds,
A single will, a million deeds.
Once slept the world an egg of stone,
And pulse, and sound, and light was none ;
And God said, "Throb !" and there was motion
And the vast mass became vast ocean.

Onward and on, the eternal Pan,
Who layeth the world's incessant plan,
Halteth never in one shape,
But forever doth escape,
Like wave or flame, into new forms
Of gem, and air, of plants, and worms.
I, that to-day am a pine,
Yesterday was a bundle of grass.
He is free and libertine,
Pouring of his power the wine
To every age, to every race ;
Unto every race and age
He emptieth the beverage ;
Unto each, and unto all,
Maker and original.
The world is the ring of his spells,
And the play of his miracles.
As he giveth to all to drink,
Thus or thus they are and think.
With one drop sheds form and feature ;
With the next a special nature ;
The third adds heat's indulgent spark ;
The fourth gives light which eats the dark ;
Into the fifth himself he flings,
And conscious Law is King of kings.
As the bee through the garden ranges,
From world to world the godhead changes ;
As the sheep go feeding in the waste,
From form to form He maketh haste ;
This vault which glows immense with light
Is the inn where he lodges for a night.
What recks such Traveller if the bowers
Which bloom and fade like meadow flowers
A bunch of fragrant lilies be,
Or the stars of eternity ?
Alike to him the better, the worse, —
The glowing angel, the outcast corse.
Thou metest him by centuries,
And lo ! he passes like the breeze ;
Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,
He hides in pure transparency ;
Thou askest in fountains and in fires,
He is the essence that inquires.
He is the axis of the star ;
He is the sparkle of the spar ;
He is the heart of every creature ;

He is the meaning of each feature ;
 And his mind is the sky,
 Than all it holds more deep, more high.'

THE SPHINX

The Sphinx is drowsy,
 Her wings are furled :
 Her ear is heavy,
 She broods on the world.
 'Who 'll tell me my secret,
 The ages have kept ? —
 I awaited the seer
 While they slumbered and slept : —

'The fate of the man-child,
 The meaning of man ;
 Known fruit of the unknown ;
 Dædalian plan ;
 Out of sleeping a waking,
 Out of waking a sleep ;
 Life death overtaking ;
 Deep underneath deep ?

'Erect as a sunbeam,
 Upspringeth the palm ;
 The elephant browses,
 Undaunted and calm ;
 In beautiful motion
 The thrush plies his wings ;
 Kind leaves of his covert,
 Your silence he sings.

'The waves, unashamed,
 In difference sweet,
 Play glad with the breezes,
 Old playfellows meet ;
 The journeying atoms,
 Primordial wholes,
 Firmly draw, firmly drive,
 By their animate poles.

'Sea, earth, air, sound, silence,
 Plant, quadruped, bird,
 By one music enchanted,
 One deity stirred, —
 Each the other adorning,
 Accompany still ;

Night veileth the morning,
The vapor the hill.

'The babe by its mother
Lies bathèd in joy ;
Glide its hours uncounted, —
The sun is its toy ;
Shines the peace of all being,
Without cloud, in its eyes ;
And the sum of the world
In soft miniature lies.

'But man crouches and blushes,
Absconds and conceals ;
He creepeth and peepeth,
He palters and steals ;
Infirm, melancholy,
Jealous glancing around,
An oaf, an accomplice,
He poisons the ground.

'Out spoke the great mother,
Beholding his fear ; —
At the sound of her accents
Cold shuddered the sphere : —
"Who has drugged my boy's cup ?
Who has mixed my boy's bread ?
Who, with sadness and madness,
Has turned my child's head ?"

I heard a poet answer
Aloud and cheerfully,
'Say on, sweet Sphinx ! thy dirges
Are pleasant songs to me.
Deep love lieth under
These pictures of time ;
They fade in the light of
Their meaning sublime.

'The fiend that man harries
Is love of the Best ;
Yawns the pit of the Dragon,
Lit by rays from the Blest.
The Lethe of Nature
Can't trace him again,
Whose soul sees the perfect,
Which his eyes seek in vain.

'To vision profounder,
 Man's spirit must dive ;
 His aye-rolling orb
 At no goal will arrive ;
 The heavens that now draw him
 With sweetness untold,
 Once found, — for new heavens
 He spurneth the old.

'Pride ruined the angels,
 Their shame them restores ;
 Lurks the joy that is sweetest
 In stings of remorse.

Have I a lover
 Who is noble and free ? —
 I would he were nobler
 Than to love me.

'Eterne alternation
 Now follows, now flies ;
 And under pain, pleasure, —
 Under pleasure, pain lies.
 Love works at the centre,
 Heart-heaving alway ;
 Forth speed the strong pulses
 To the borders of day.

'Dull Sphinx, Jove keep thy five wits ;
 Thy sight is growing blear ;
 Rue, myrrh and cummin for the Sphinx,
 Her muddy eyes to clear !'
 The old Sphinx bit her thick lip, —
 Said, 'Who taught thee me to name ?
 I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow ;
 Of thine eye I am eyebeam.

'Thou art the unanswered question ;
 Couldst see thy proper eye,
 Always it asketh, asketh ;
 And each answer is a lie.
 So take thy quest through nature,
 It through thousand natures ply ;
 Ask on, thou clothed eternity ;
 Time is the false reply.'

Uprose the merry Sphinx,
 And crouched no more in stone ;
 She melted into purple cloud,
 She silvered in the moon ;

She spired into a yellow flame;
 She flowered in blossoms red;
 She flowed into a foaming wave:
 She stood Monadnoc's head.

Thorough a thousand voices
 Spoke the universal dame;
 'Who telleth one of my meanings
 Is master of all I am.'

THE SNOW-STORM

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
 Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
 Seems nowhere to alight: the whitened air
 Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
 And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
 The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
 Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
 Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
 In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
 Out of an unseen quarry evermore
 Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
 Curves his white bastions with projected roof
 Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
 Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
 So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
 For number or proportion. Mockingly,
 On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
 A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
 Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
 Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
 A tapering turret overtops the work.
 And when his hours are numbered, and the world
 Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
 Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
 To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
 Built in an age, the mad wind's nightwork,
 The frolic architecture of the snow.

THE INFORMING SPIRIT

I

There is no great and no small
 To the Soul that maketh all:

And where it cometh, all things are ;
And it cometh everywhere.

II

I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain.

FRIENDSHIP

A ruddy drop of manly blood
The surging sea outweighs,
The world uncertain comes and goes ;
The lover rooted stays.
I fancied he was fled, —
And, after many a year,
Glowed unexhausted kindliness,
Like daily sunrise there.
My careful heart was free again,
O friend, my bosom said,
Through thee alone the sky is arched,
Through thee the rose is red ;
All things through thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth,
The mill-round of our fate appears
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me too thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair ;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair.

FOR BEARANCE

Hast thou named all the birds without a gun ?
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk ?
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse ?
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust ?
And loved so well a high behavior,
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,
Nobility more nobly to repay ?
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine !

ODE TO BEAUTY

Who gave thee, O Beauty,
The keys of this breast, —

Too credulous lover
 Of blest and unblest?
 Say, when in lapsed ages
 Thee knew I of old?
 Or what was the service
 For which I was sold?
 When first my eyes saw thee,
 I found me thy thrall,
 By magical drawings,
 Sweet tyrant of all!
 I drank at thy fountain
 False waters of thirst;
 Thou intimate stranger,
 Thou latest and first!
 Thy dangerous glances
 Make women of men;
 New-born, we are melting
 Into nature again.

Lavish, lavish promiser,
 Nigh persuading gods to err!
 Guest of million painted forms,
 Which in turn thy glory warms!
 The frailest leaf, the mossy bark,
 The acorn's cup, the raindrop's arc,
 The swinging spider's silver line,
 The ruby of the drop of wine,
 The shining pebble of the pond,
 Thou inscribest with a bond,
 In thy momentary play,
 Would bankrupt nature to repay.

Ah, what avails it
 To hide or to shun
 Whom the Infinite One
 Hath granted his throne?
 The heaven high over
 Is the deep's lover;
 The sun and sea,
 Informed by thee,
 Before me run
 And draw me on,
 Yet fly me still,
 As Fate refuses
 To me the heart Fate for me chooses.
 Is it that my opulent soul
 Was mingled from the generous whole,

Sea-valleys and the deep of skies
Furnished several supplies ;
And the sands whereof I 'm made
Draw me to them, self-betrayed ?
I turn the proud portfolio
Which holds the grand designs
Of Salvator, of Guercino,
And Piranesi's lines.
I hear the lofty pæans
Of the masters of the shell,
Who heard the starry music
And recount the numbers well ;
Olympian bards who sung
Divine Ideas below,
Which always find us young
And always keep us so.
Oft, in streets or humblest places,
I detect far-wandered graces,
Which, from Eden wide astray,
In lowly homes have lost their way.

Thee gliding through the sea of form,
Like the lightning through the storm,
Somewhat not to be possessed,
Somewhat not to be caressed,
No feet so fleet could ever find,
No perfect form could ever bind.
Thou eternal fugitive,
Hovering over all that live,
Quick and skilful to inspire
Sweet, extravagant desire,
Starry space and lily-bell
Filling with thy roseate smell,
Wilt not give the lips to taste
Of the nectar which thou hast.

All that 's good and great with thee
Works in close conspiracy ;
Thou hast bribed the dark and lonely
To report thy features only,
And the cold and purple morning
Itself with thoughts of thee adorning ;
The leafy dell, the city mart,
Equal trophies of thine art ;
E'en the flowing azure air
Thou hast touched for my despair ;

And, if I languish into dreams,
 Again I meet the ardent beams.
 Queen of things ! I dare not die
 In Being's deeps past ear and eye ;
 Lest there I find the same deceiver
 And be the sport of Fate forever.
 Dread Power, but dear ! if God thou be,
 Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me !

NATURE

The rounded world is fair to see,
 Nine times folded in mystery :
 Though baffled seers cannot impart
 The secret of its laboring heart,
 Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,
 And all is clear from east to west.
 Spirit that lurks each form within
 Beckons to spirit of its kin ;
 Self-kindled every atom glows
 And hints the future which it owes.

EXPERIENCE

The lords of life, the lords of life, —
 I saw them pass
 In their own guise,
 Like and unlike,
 Portly and grim, —
 Use and Surprise,
 Surface and Dream,
 Succession swift and spectral Wrong,
 Temperament without a tongue,
 And the inventor of the game
 Omnipresent without name ; —
 Some to see, some to be guessed,
 They marched from east to west :
 Little man, least of all,
 Among the legs of his guardians tall,
 Walked about with puzzled look.
 Him by the hand dear Nature took,
 Dearest Nature, strong and kind,
 Whispered, 'Darling, never mind !'
 To-morrow they will wear another face,
 The founder thou ; these are thy race !'

THRENODY

The South-wind brings
Life, sunshine and desire,
And on every mount and meadow
Breathes aromatic fire;
But over the dead he has no power,
The lost, the lost, he cannot restore;
And, looking over the hills, I mourn
The darling who shall not return.

I see my empty house,
I see my trees repair their boughs;
And he, the wondrous child,
Whose silver warble wild
Outvalued every pulsing sound
Within the air's cerulean round,—
The hyacinthine boy, for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom,
The gracious boy, who did adorn
The world whereinto he was born,
And by his countenance repay
The favor of the loving Day,—
Has disappeared from the Day's eye;
Far and wide she cannot find him;
My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.
Returned this day, the South-wind searches,
And finds young pines and budding birches;
But finds not the budding man;
Nature, who lost, cannot remake him;
Fate let him fall, Fate can't retake him;
Nature, Fate, men, him seek in vain.

And whither now, my truant wise and sweet,
O, whither tend thy feet?
I had the right, few days ago,
Thy steps to watch, thy place to know:
How have I forfeited the right?
Hast thou forgot me in a new delight?
I hearken for thy household cheer,
O eloquent child!
Whose voice, an equal messenger,
Conveyed thy meaning mild.
What though the pains and joys
Whereof it spoke were toys
Fitting his age and ken,
Yet fairest dames and bearded men,

Who heard the sweet request,
So gentle, wise and grave,
Bended with joy to his behest
And let the world's affairs go by,
A while to share his cordial game,
Or mend his wicker wagon-frame,
Still plotting how their hungry ear
That winsome voice again might hear ;
For his lips could well pronounce
Words that were persuasions.

Gentlest guardians marked serene
His early hope, his liberal mien ;
Took counsel from his guiding eyes
To make this wisdom earthly wise.
Ah, vainly do these eyes recall
The school-march, each day's festival,
When every morn my bosom glowed
To watch the convoy on the road ;
The babe in willow wagon closed,
With rolling eyes and face composed ;
With children forward and behind,
Like Cupids studiously inclined ;
And he the chieftain paced beside,
The centre of the troop allied,
With sunny face of sweet repose,
To guard the babe from fancied foes.
The little captain innocent
Took the eye with him as he went ;
Each village senior paused to scan
And speak the lovely caravan.
From the window I look out
To mark thy beautiful parade,
Stately marching in cap and coat
To some tune by fairies played ; —
A music heard by thee alone
To works as noble led thee on.

Now Love and Pride, alas ! in vain,
Up and down their glances strain.
The painted sled stands where it stood ;
The kennel by the corded wood ;
His gathered sticks to stanch the wall
Of the snow-tower, when snow should fall ;
The ominous hole he dug in the sand,
And childhood's castles built or planned :

His daily haunts I well discern, —
The poultry-yard, the shed, the barn, —
And every inch of garden ground
Paced by the blessed feet around,
From the roadside to the brook
Whereinto he loved to look.
Step the meek fowls where erst they ranged ;
The wintry garden lies unchanged ;
The brook into the stream runs on ;
But the deep-eyed boy is gone.
On that shaded day,
Dark with more clouds than tempests are,
When thou didst yield thy innocent breath
In birdlike heavings unto death,
Night came, and Nature had not thee ;
I said, ‘We are mates in misery.’
The morrow dawned with needless glow ;
Each snowbird chirped, each fowl must crow ;
Each trumper started ; but the feet
Of the most beautiful and sweet
Of human youth had left the hill
And garden, — they were bound and still.
There’s not a sparrow or a wren,
There’s not a blade of autumn grain,
Which the four seasons do not tend
And tides of life and increase lend ;
And every chick of every bird,
And weed and rock-moss is preferred.
O ostrich-like forgetfulness !
O loss of larger in the less !
Was there no star that could be sent,
No watcher in the firmament,
No angel from the countless host
That loiters round the crystal coast,
Could stoop to heal that only child,
Nature’s sweet marvel undefiled,
And keep the blossom of the earth,
Which all her harvests were not worth ?
Not mine, — I never called thee mine,
But Nature’s heir, — if I repine,
And seeing rashly torn and moved
Not what I made, but what I loved,
Grow early old with grief that thou
Must to the wastes of Nature go, —
‘T is because a general hope
Was quenched, and all must doubt and grope.

For flattering planets seemed to say
This child should ills of ages stay.
By wondrous tongue, and guided pen,
Bring the flown Muses back to men.
Perchance not he but Nature ailed,
The word and not the infant failed.
It was not ripe yet to sustain
A genius of so fine a strain,
Who gazed upon the sun and moon
As if he came unto his own,
And, pregnant with his grander thought,
Brought the old order into doubt.
His beauty once their beauty tried ;
They could not feed him, and he died,
And wandered backward as in scorn,
To wait an æon to be born.
Ill day which made this beauty waste,
Plight broken, this high face defaced !
Some went and came about the dead ;
And some in books of solace read ;
Some to their friends the tidings say ;
Some went to write, some went to pray ;
One tarried here, there hurried one ;
But their heart abode with none.
Covetous death bereaved us all,
To aggrandize one funeral.
The eager fate which carried thee
Took the largest part of me :
For this losing is true dying ;
This is lordly man's down-lying,
This his slow but sure reclining,
Star by star his world resigning.

O child of paradise,
Boy who made dear his father's home,
In whose deep eyes
Men read the welfare of the times to come,
I am too much bereft.
The world dishonored thou hast left.
O truth's and nature's costly lie !
O trusted broken prophecy !
O richest fortune sourly crossed !
Born for the future, to the future lost !

The deep Heart answered, 'Weepest thou ?
Worthier cause for passion wild
If I had not taken the child.'

And deemest thou as those who pore,
With aged eyes, short way before,—
Think'st Beauty vanished from the coast
Of matter, and thy darling lost?
Taught he not thee — the man of eld,
Whose eyes within his eyes beheld
Heaven's numerous hierarchy span
The mystic gulf from God to man?
To be alone wilt thou begin
When worlds of lovers hem thee in?
To-morrow, when the masks shall fall
That dizen Nature's carnival,
The pure shall see by their own will,
Which overflowing Love shall fill,
'T is not within the force of fate
The fate-conjoined to separate.
But thou, my votary, weepest thou?
I gave thee sight — where is it now?
I taught thy heart beyond the reach
Of ritual, bible, or of speech;
Wrote in thy mind's transparent table,
As far as the incommunicable;
Taught thee each private sign to raise
Lit by the supersolar blaze.
Past utterance, and past belief,
And past the blasphemy of grief,
The mysteries of Nature's heart;
And though no Muse can these impart,
Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,
And all is clear from east to west.

'I came to thee as to a friend;
Dearest, to thee I did not send
Tutors, but a joyful eye,
Innocence that matched the sky,
Lovely locks, a form of wonder,
Laughter rich as woodland thunder,
That thou might'st entertain apart
The richest flowering of all art:
And, as the great all-loving Day
Through smallest chambers takes its way,
That thou might'st break thy daily bread
With prophet, savior and head;
That thou might'st cherish for thine own
The riches of sweet Mary's Son,
Boy-Rabbi, Israel's paragon.

And thoughtest thou such guest
Would in thy hall take up his rest?
Would rushing life forget her laws,
Fate's glowing revolution pause?
High omens ask diviner guess;
Not to be conned to tediousness.
And know my higher gifts unbind
The zone that girds the incarnate mind.
When the scanty shores are full
With Thought's perilous, whirling pool;
When frail Nature can no more,
Then the Spirit strikes the hour:
My servant Death, with solving rite,
Pours finite into infinite.
Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow
Whose streams through Nature circling go?
Nail the wild star to its track
On the half-climbed zodiac?
Light is light which radiates,
Blood is blood which circulates,
Life is life which generates,
And many-seeming life is one,—
Wilt thou transfix and make it none?
Its onward force too starkly pent
In figure, bone and lineament?
Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,
Talker! the unreplying Fate?
Nor see the genius of the whole
Ascendant in the private soul,
Beckon it when to go and come,
Self-announced its hour of doom?
Fair the soul's recess and shrine,
Magic-built to last a season;
Masterpiece of love benign,
Fairer that expansive reason
Whose omen 't is, and sign.
Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know
What rainbows teach, and sunsets show?
Verdict which accumulates
From lengthening scroll of human fates,
Voice of earth to earth returned,
Prayers of saints that inly burned,—
Saying, *What is excellent,*
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again.

Revere the Maker ; fetch thine eye
 Up to his style, and manners of the sky.
 Not of adamant and gold
 Built he heaven stark and cold ;
 No, but a nest of bending reeds,
 Flowering grass and scented weeds ;
 Or like a traveller's fleeing tent,
 Or bow above the tempest bent ;
 Built of tears and sacred flames,
 And virtue reaching to its aims ;
 Built of furtherance and pursuing,
 Not of spent deeds, but of doing.
 Silent rushes the swift Lord
 Through ruined systems still restored,
 Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
 Plants with worlds the wilderness ;
 Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
 Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.
 House and tenant go to ground,
 Lost in God, in Godhead found.'

ODE

INSCRIBED TO W. H. CHANNING

Though loath to grieve
 The evil time's sole patriot,
 I cannot leave
 My honeyed thought
 For the priest's cant,
 Or statesman's rant.

If I refuse
 My study for their politique,
 Which at the best is trick,
 The angry Muse
 Puts confusion in my brain.

But who is he that prates
 Of the culture of mankind,
 Of better arts and life ?
 Go, blindworm, go,
 Behold the famous States
 Harrying Mexico
 With rifle and with knife !

Or who, with accent bolder,
 Dare praise the freedom-loving mountaineer?
 I found by thee, O rushing Contoocook!
 And in thy valleys, Agiochook!
 The jackals of the negro-holder.

The God who made New Hampshire
 Taunted the lofty land
 With little men; —
 Small bat and wren
 House in the oak: —
 If earth-fire cleave
 The upheaved land, and bury the folk,
 The southern crocodile would grieve.
 Virtue palters; Right is hence;
 Freedom praised, but hid;
 Funeral eloquence
 Rattles the coffin-lid.

What boots thy zeal,
 O glowing friend,
 That would indignant rend
 The northland from the south?
 Wherefore? to what good end?
 Boston Bay and Bunker Hill
 Would serve things still; —
 Things are of the snake.

The horseman serves the horse,
 The neatherd serves the neat,
 The merchant serves the purse,
 The eater serves his meat;
 'T is the day of the chattel,
 Web to weave, and corn to grind;
 Things are in the saddle,
 And ride mankind.

There are two laws discrete,
 Not reconciled, —
 Law for man, and law for thing;
 The last builds town and fleet,
 But it runs wild,
 And doth the man unking.

'T is fit the forest fall,
 The steep be graded,
 The mountain tunnelled,

The sand shaded,
The orchard planted,
The glebe tilled,
The prairie granted,
The steamer built.

Let man serve law for man ;
Live for friendship, live for love,
For truth's and harmony's behoof ;
The state may follow how it can,
As Olympus follows Jove.

Yet do not I implore
The wrinkled shopman to my sounding woods,
Nor bid the unwilling senator
Ask votes of thrushes in the solitudes.
Every one to his chosen work ; —
Foolish hands may mix and mar ;
Wise and sure the issues are.
Round they roll till dark is light,
Sex to sex, and even to odd ; —
The over-god
Who marries Right to Might,
Who peoples, unpeoples, —
He who exterminates
Races by stronger races,
Black by white faces, —
Knows to bring honey
Out of the lion ;
Grafts gentlest scion
On pirate and Turk.
The Cossack eats Poland,
Like stolen fruit ;
Her last noble is ruined,
Her last poet mute :
Straight, into double band
The victors divide ;
Half for freedom strike and stand ; —
The astonished Muse finds thousands at her side.

MERLIN

Thy trivial harp will never please
Or fill my craving ear ;
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,
Free, peremptory, clear.

No jingling serenader's art,
Nor tinkle of piano strings,
Can make the wild blood start
In its mystic springs.
The kingly bard
Must smite the chords rudely and hard,
As with hammer or with mace ;
That they may render back
Artful thunder, which conveys
Secrets of the solar track,
Sparks of the supersolar blaze.
Merlin's blows are strokes of fate,
Chiming with the forest tone,
When boughs buffet boughs in the wood ;
Chiming with the gasp and moan
Of the ice-imprisoned flood ;
With the pulse of manly hearts ;
With the voice of orators ;
With the din of city arts ;
With the cannonade of wars ;
With the marches of the brave ;
And prayers of might from martyrs' cave.

Great is the art,
Great be the manners, of the bard.
He shall not his brain encumber
With the coil of rhythm and number ;
But, leaving rule and pale forethought,
He shall aye climb
For his rhyme.
'Pass in, pass in,' the angels say,
'In to the upper doors,
Nor count compartments of the floors,
But mount to paradise
By the stairway of surprise.'

Blameless master of the games,
King of sport that never shames,
He shall daily joy dispense
Hid in song's sweet influence.
Forms more cheerly live and go,
What time the subtle mind
Sings aloud the tune whereto
Their pulses beat,
And march their feet,
And their members are combined.

By Sybarites beguiled,
 He shall no task decline.
 Merlin's mighty line
 Extremes of nature reconciled, —
 Bereaved a tyrant of his will,
 And made the lion mild.
 Songs can the tempest still,
 Scattered on the stormy air,
 Mould the year to fair increase,
 And bring in poetic peace.

He shall not seek to weave,
 In weak, unhappy times,
 Efficacious rhymes ;
 Wait his returning strength.
 Bird that from nadir's floor
 To the zenith's top can soar, —
 The soaring orbit of the muse exceeds that journey's length.
 Nor profane affect to hit
 Or compass that, by meddling wit,
 Which only the propitious mind
 Publishes when 't is inclined.
 There are open hours
 When the God's will sallies free,
 And the dull idiot might see
 The flowing fortunes of a thousand years ; —
 Sudden, at unawares,
 Self-moved, fly-to the doors,
 Nor sword of angels could reveal
 What they conceal.

BACCHUS

Bring me wine, but wine which never grew
 In the belly of the grape,
 Or grew on vine whose tap-roots, reaching through,
 Under the Andes to the Cape,
 Suffer no savor of the earth to 'scape.
 Let its grapes the morn salute
 From a nocturnal root,
 Which feels the acrid juice
 Of Styx and Erebus ;
 And turns the woe of Night,
 By its own craft, to a more rich delight.

We buy ashes for bread ;
 We buy diluted wine ;

Give me of the true,—
 Whose ample leaves and tendrils curled
 Among the silver hills of heaven
 Draw everlasting dew;
 Wine of wine,
 Blood of the world,
 Form of forms, and mould of statures,
 That I intoxicated,
 And by the draught assimilated,
 May float at pleasure through all natures;
 The bird-language rightly spell,
 And that which roses say so well.

Wine that is shed
 Like the torrents of the sun
 Up the horizon walls,
 Or like the Atlantic streams, which run
 When the South Sea calls.

Water and bread,
 Food which needs no transmuting,
 Rainbow-flowering, wisdom-fruited,
 Wine which is already man,
 Food which teach and reason can.

Wine which Music is,—
 Music and wine are one,—
 That I, drinking this,
 Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;
 Kings unborn shall walk with me;
 And the poor grass shall plot and plan
 What it will do when it is man.
 Quickened so, will I unlock
 Every crypt of every rock.

I thank the joyful juice
 For all I know;—
 Winds of remembering
 Of the ancient being blow,
 And seeming-solid walls of use
 Open and flow.

Pour, Bacchus! the remembering wine;
 Retrieve the loss of me and mine!
 Vine for vine be antidote,
 And the grape requite the lotte!
 Haste to cure the old despair,—

Reason in Nature's lotus drenched,
 The memory of ages quenched ;
 Give them again to shine ;
 Let wine repair what this undid ;
 And where the infection slid,
 A dazzling memory revive ;
 Refresh the faded tints,
 Recut the aged prints,
 And write my old adventures with the pen
 Which on the first day drew,
 Upon the tablets blue,
 The dancing Pleiads and eternal men.

HAMATREYA

Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint
 Possessed the land which rendered to their toil
 Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and wood.
 Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm,
 Saying, ' 'T is mine, my children's and my name's.
 How sweet the west wind sounds in my own trees.
 How graceful climb those shadows on my hill !
 I fancy these pure waters and the flags
 Know me, as does my dog : we sympathize ;
 And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil.'
 Where are these men ? Asleep beneath their grounds :
 And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
 Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys
 Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs ;
 Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet
 Clear of the grave.
 They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,
 And sighed for all that bounded their domain ;
 ' This suits me for a pasture ; that 's my park ;
 We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge,
 And misty lowland, where to go for peat.
 The land is well, — lies fairly to the south.
 ' T is good, when you have crossed the sea and back,
 To find the sitfast acres where you left them.'
 Ah ! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds
 Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.
 Hear what the Earth says : —

EARTH-SONG

' Mine and yours ;
 Mine, not yours.

Earth endures ;
 Stars abide —
 Shine down in the old sea ;
 Old are the shores ;
 But where are old men ?
 I who have seen much,
 Such have I never seen.

‘The lawyer’s deed
 Ran sure,
 In tail,
 To them, and to their heirs
 Who shall succeed,
 Without fail,
 Forevermore.

‘Here is the land,
 Shaggy with wood,
 With its old valley,
 Mound and flood.
 But the heritors ? —
 Fled like the flood’s foam.
 The lawyer, and the laws,
 And the kingdom,
 Clean swept herefrom.

‘They called me theirs,
 Who so controlled me ;
 Yet every one
 Wished to stay, and is gone,
 How am I theirs,
 If they cannot hold me,
 But I hold them ? ’

When I heard the Earth-song
 I was no longer brave ;
 My avarice cooled
 Like lust in the chill of the grave.

FORERUNNERS

Long I followed happy guides,
 I could never reach their sides ;
 Their step is forth, and, ere the day
 Breaks up their leaguer, and away.
 Keen my sense, my heart was young,
 Right good-will my sinews strung,

But no speed of mine avails
To hunt upon their shining trails.
On and away, their hasting feet
Make the morning proud and sweet;
Flowers they strew, — I catch the scent;
Or tone of silver instrument
Leaves on the wind melodious trace;
Yet I could never see their face.
On eastern hills I see their smokes,
Mixed with mist by distant lochs.
I met many travellers
Who the road had surely kept;
They saw not my fine revellers, —
These had crossed them while they slept.
Some had heard their fair report,
In the country or the court.
Fleetest couriers alive
Never yet could once arrive,
As they went or they returned,
At the house where these sojourned.
Sometimes their strong speed they slacken,
Though they are not overtaken;
In sleep their jubilant troop is near, —
I tuneful voices overhear;
It may be in wood or waste, —
At unawares 't is come and past.
Their near camp my spirit knows
By signs gracious as rainbows.
I thenceforward and long after
Listen for their harp-like laughter,
And carry in my heart, for days,
Peace that hallows rudest ways.

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse, —
Nothing refuse.

'T is a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:

High and more high
 It dives into noon,
 With wing unspent,
 Untold intent ;
 But it is a god,
 Knows its own path
 And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean ;
 It requireth courage stout.
 Souls above doubt,
 Valor unbending,
 It will reward, —
 They shall return
 More than they were,
 And ever ascending.

Leave all for love ;
 Yet, hear me, yet,
 One word more thy heart behoved,
 One pulse more of firm endeavor, —
 Keep thee to-day,
 To-morrow, forever,
 Free as an Arab
 Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid ;
 But when the surprise,
 First vague shadow of surmise
 Flits across her bosom young,
 Of a joy apart from thee,
 Free be she, fancy-free ;
 Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,
 Nor the palest rose she flung
 From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
 As a self of purer clay,
 Though her parting dims the day,
 Stealing grace from all alive ;
 Heartily know,
 When half-gods go,
 The gods arrive.

M E R O P S

What care I, so they stand the same, —
 Things of the heavenly mind, —

How long the power to give them name
Tarries yet behind?

Thus far to-day your favors reach,
O fair, appeasing presences!
Ye taught my lips a single speech,
And a thousand silences.

Space grants beyond his fated road
No inch to the god of day;
And copious language still bestowed
One word, no more, to say.

MUSKETAQUID

Because I was content with these poor fields,
Low, open meads, slender and sluggish streams,
And found a home in haunts which others scorned,
The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,
And granted me the freedom of their state,
And in their secret senate have prevailed
With the dear, dangerous lords that rule our life,
Made moon and planets parties to their bond,
And through my rock-like, solitary wont
Shot million rays of thought and tenderness.
For me, in showers, in sweeping showers, the Spring
Visits the valley; — break away the clouds, —
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,
Blue-coated, — flying before from tree to tree,
Courageous sing a delicate overture
To lead the tardy concert of the year.
Onward and nearer rides the sun of May;
And wide around, the marriage of the plants
Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain
The surge of summer's beauty; dell and crag,
Hollow and lake, hillside and pine arcade,
Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged cliff
Has thousand faces in a thousand hours.

Beneath low hills, in the broad interval
Through which at will our Indian rivulet
Winds mindful still of sannup and of squaw,
Whose pipe and arrow oft the plough unburies,
Here in pine houses built of new-fallen trees,

Supplanters of the tribe, the farmers dwell.
Traveller, to thee, perchance, a tedious road,
Or, it may be, a picture; to these men,
The landscape is an armory of powers,
Which, one by one, they know to draw and use.
They harness beast, bird, insect, to their work;
They prove the virtues of each bed of rock,
And, like the chemist 'mid his loaded jars,
Draw from each stratum its adapted use
To drug their crops or weapon their arts withal.
They turn the frost upon their chemic heap,
They set the wind to winnow pulse and grain,
They thank the spring-flood for its fertile slime,
And, on cheap summit-levels of the snow,
Slide with the sledge to inaccessible woods
O'er meadows bottomless. So, year by year,
They fight the elements with elements
(That one would say, meadow and forest walked
Transmuted in these men to rule their like),
And by the order in the field disclose
The order regnant in the yeoman's brain.

What these strong masters wrote at large in miles,
I followed in small copy in my acre;
For there's no rood has not a star above it;
The cordial quality of pear or plum
Ascends as gladly in a single tree
As in broad orchards resonant with bees;
And every atom poises for itself,
And for the whole. The gentle deities
Showed me the lore of colors and of sounds,
The innumerable tenements of beauty,
The miracle of generative force,
Far-reaching concords of astronomy
Felt in the plants and in the punctual birds;
Better, the linked purpose of the whole,
And, chiefest prize, found I true liberty
In the glad home plain-dealing Nature gave.
The polite found me impolite; the great
Would mortify me, but in vain; for still
I am a willow of the wilderness,
Loving the wind that bent me. All my hurts
My garden spade can heal. A woodland walk,
A quest of river-grapes, a mocking thrush,
A wild-rose, or rock-loving columbine,
Salve my worst wounds.

For thus the wood-gods murmured in my ear :
 'Dost love our manners? Canst thou silent lie?
 Canst thou, thy pride forgot, like Nature pass
 Into the winter night's extinguished mood?
 Canst thou shine now, then darkle,
 And being latent, feel thyself no less?
 As, when the all-worshipped moon attracts the eye,
 The river, hill, stems, foliage are obscure,
 Yet envies none, none are unenviable.'

N A T U R E

A subtle chain of countless rings
 The next unto the farthest brings ;
 The eye reads omens where it goes,
 And speaks all languages the rose ;
 And, striving to be man, the worm
 Mounts through all the spires of form.

D A Y S

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
 Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
 And marching single in an endless file,
 Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
 To each they offer gifts after his will,
 Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
 I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
 Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
 Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
 Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
 Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

T W O R I V E R S

Thy summer voice, Musketaquit,
 Repeats the music of the rain ;
 But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
 Through thee, as thou through Concord Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent :
 The stream I love unbounded goes
 Through flood and sea and firmament ;
 Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,
 I hear the spending of the stream

Through years, through men, through Nature fleet,
Through love and thought, through power and dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay ;
They lose their grief who hear his song,
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream, —
Who drink it shall not thirst again ;
No darkness stains its equal gleam
And ages drop in it like rain.

B R A H M A

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near ;
Shadow and sunlight are the same ;
The vanished gods to me appear ;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out ;
When me they fly, I am the wings ;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven ;
But thou, meek lover of the good !
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

N E M E S I S

Already blushes on thy cheek
The bosom thought which thou must speak ;
The bird, how far it haply roam
By cloud or isle, is flying home ;
The maiden fears, and fearing runs
Into the charmed snare she shuns ;
And every man, in love or pride,
Of his fate is never wide.

Will a woman's fan the ocean smooth ?
Or prayers the stony Parcæ soothe,

Or coax the thunder from its mark?
 Or tapers light the chaos dark?
 In spite of Virtue and the Muse,
 Nemesis will have her dues,
 And all our struggles and our toils
 Tighter wind the giant coils.

NATURE

I

Winters know
 Easily to shed the snow,
 And the untaught Spring is wise
 In cowslips and anemones.
 Nature, hating art and pains,
 Baulks and baffles plotting brains;
 Casualty and Surprise
 Are the apples of her eyes;
 But she dearly loves the poor,
 And, by marvel of her own,
 Strikes the loud pretender down.
 For Nature listens in the rose
 And hearkens in the berry's bell
 To help her friends, to plague her foes,
 And likewise God she judges well.
 Yet doth much her love excel
 To the souls that never fell,
 To swains that live in happiness
 And do well because they please,
 Who walk in ways that are unfamed,
 And feats achieve before they're named.

NATURE

II

She is gamesome and good,
 But of mutable mood,—
 No dreary repeater now and again,
 She will be all things to all men.
 She who is old, but nowise feeble,
 Pours her power into the people,
 Merry and manifold without bar,
 Makes and moulds them what they are,
 And what they call their city way
 Is not their way, but hers,

And what they say they made to-day,
 They learned of the oaks and firs.
 She spawneth men as mallows fresh,
 Hero and maiden, flesh of her flesh ;
 She drugs her water and her wheat
 With the flavors she finds meet,
 And gives them what to drink and eat ;
 And having thus their bread and growth,
 They do her bidding, nothing loath.
 What 's most theirs is not their own,
 But borrowed in atoms from iron and stone,
 And in their vaunted works of Art
 The master-stroke is still her part.

SEASHORE

I heard or seemed to hear the chiding Sea
 Say, Pilgrim, why so late and slow to come ?
 Am I not always here, thy summer home ?
 Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve ?
 My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,
 My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath ?
 Was ever building like my terraces ?
 Was ever couch magnificent as mine ?
 Lie on the warm rock-ledges, and there learn
 A little hut suffices like a town.
 I make your sculptured architecture vain,
 Vain beside mine. I drive my wedges home,
 And carve the coastwise mountain into caves.
 Lo ! here is Rome and Nineveh and Thebes,
 Karnak and Pyramid and Giant's Stairs
 Half piled or prostrate ; and my newest slab
 Older than all thy race.

Behold the Sea,
 The opaline, the plentiful and strong,
 Yet beautiful as is the rose in June,
 Fresh as the trickling rainbow of July ;
 Sea full of food, the nourisher of kinds,
 Purger of earth, and medicine of men ;
 Creating a sweet climate by my breath,
 Washing out harms and griefs from memory,
 And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,
 Giving a hint of that which changes not.
 Rich are the sea-gods : — who gives gifts but they ?
 They grope the sea for pearls, but more than pearls :

They pluck Force thence, and give it to the wise.
 For every wave is wealth to Dædalus,
 Wealth to the cunning artist who can work
 This matchless strength. Where shall he find, O waves !
 A load your Atlas shoulders cannot lift?

I with my hammer pounding evermore
 The rocky coast, smite Andes into dust,
 Strewing my bed, and, in another age,
 Rebuild a continent of better men.
 Then I unbar the doors : my paths lead out
 The exodus of nations : I disperse
 Men to all shores that front the hoary main.

I too have arts and sorceries ;
 Illusion dwells forever with the wave.
 I know what spells are laid. Leave me to deal
 With credulous and imaginative man ;
 For, though he scoop my water in his palm,
 A few rods off he deems it gems and clouds.
 Planting strange fruits and sunshine on the shore,
 I make some coast alluring, some lone isle,
 To distant men, who must go there, or die.

THE BOHEMIAN HYMN

In many forms we try
 To utter God's infinity,
 But the boundless hath no form,
 And the Universal Friend
 Doth as far transcend
 An angel as a worm.

The great Idea baffles wit,
 Language falters under it,
 It leaves the learned in the lurch ;
 Nor art, nor power, nor toil can find
 The measure of the eternal Mind,
 Nor hymn, nor prayer, nor church.

PAN

O what are heroes, prophets, men,
 But pipes through which the breath of Pan doth blow
 A momentary music. Being's tide
 Swells hitherward, and myriads of forms

Live, robed with beauty, painted by the sun ;
 Their dust, pervaded by the nerves of God,
 Throbs with an overmastering energy
 Knowing and doing. Ebbs the tide, they lie
 White hollow shells upon the desert shore,
 But not the less the eternal wave rolls on
 To animate new millions, and exhale
 Races and planets, its enchanted foam.

MUSIC

Let me go where'er I will,
 I hear a sky-born music still :
 It sounds from all things old,
 It sounds from all things young,
 From all that 's fair, from all that 's foul,
 Peals out a cheerful song.

It is not only in the rose,
 It is not only in the bird,
 Not only where the rainbow glows,
 Nor in the song of woman heard,
 But in the darkest, meanest things
 There alway, alway somthing sings.

'T is not in the high stars alone,
 Nor in the cup of budding flowers,
 Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
 Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,
 But in the mud and scum of things
 There alway, alway something sings.

EPIGRAMS

The sun set, but set not his hope :—
 Stars rose, his faith was earlier up :
 Fixed on the enormous galaxy,
 Deeper and older seemed his eye,
 And matched his sufferance sublime
 The taciturnity of Time.
 He spoke, and words more soft than rain
 Brought the Age of Gold again :
 His action won such reverence sweet
 As hid all measure of thefeat.

Pale genius roves alone,
No scout can track his way,
None credits him till he have shown
His diamonds to the day.

Not his the feaster's wine,
Nor land, nor gold, nor power,
By want and pain God screeneth him
Till his elected hour.

Go, speed the stars of Thought
On to their shining goals : —
The sower scatters broad his seed,
The wheat thou strew'st be souls.

I framed his tongue to music,
I armed his hand with skill,
I moulded his face to beauty
And his heart the throne of Will.

Try the might the Muse affords
And the balm of thoughtful words ;
Bring music to the desolate ;
Hang roses on the stony fate.

And as the light divides the dark
Through with living swords,
So shalt thou pierce the distant age
With adamantine words.

If Thought unlock her mysteries,
If Friendship on me smile,
I walk in marble galleries,
I talk with kings the while.

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*.

That each should in his house abide,
Therefore was the world so wide.

TERMINUS

It is time to be old,
To take in sail : —
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said : ‘No more !
No farther shoot
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs : no more invent ;
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There ’s not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two ;
Economize the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot ;
A little while
Still plan and smile,
And, — fault of novel germs, —
Mature the unfallen fruit.
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
Bad husbands of their fires,
Who, when they gave thee breath,
Failed to bequeath
The needful sinew stark as once,
The Baresark marrow to thy bones,
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins, —
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.’

As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime :
‘Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed ;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed.’

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

THE SPIRIT OF POETRY

There is a quiet spirit in these woods,
 That dwells where'er the gentle south-wind blows ;
 Where, underneath the white-thorn in the glade,
 The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,
 The leaves above their sunny palms outspread.
 With what a tender and impassioned voice
 It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,
 When the fast ushering star of morning comes
 O'er-riding the gray hills with golden scarf ;
 Or when the cowled and dusky-sandalled Eve,
 In mourning weeds, from out the western gate,
 Departs with silent pace ! That spirit moves
 In the green valley, where the silver brook,
 From its full laver, pours the white cascade ;
 And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,
 Slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter.
 And frequent, on the everlasting hills,
 Its feet go forth, when it doth wrap itself
 In all the dark embroidery of the storm,
 And shouts the stern, strong wind. And here, amid
 The silent majesty of these deep woods,
 Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,
 As to the sunshine and the pure, bright air
 Their tops the green trees lift. Hence gifted bards
 Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades.
 For them there was an eloquent voice in all
 The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun,
 The flowers, the leaves, the river on its way,
 Blue skies, and silver clouds, and gentle winds,
 The swelling upland, where the sidelong sun
 Aslant the wooded slope, at evening, goes,
 Groves, through whose broken roof the sky looks in,
 Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny vale,
 The distant lake, fountains, and mighty trees,
 In many a lazy syllable, repeating
 Their old poetic legends to the wind.

And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill
 The world ; and, in these wayward days of youth,
 My busy fancy oft embodies it,
 As a bright image of the light and beauty
 That dwell in nature ; of the heavenly forms

We worship in our dreams, and the soft hues
 That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush the clouds
 When the sun sets. Within her tender eye
 The heaven of April, with its changing light,
 And when it wears the blue of May, is hung,
 And on her lip the rich, red rose. Her hair
 Is like the summer tresses of the trees,
 When twilight makes them brown, and on her cheek
 Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,
 With ever-shifting beauty. Then her breath,
 It is so like the gentle air of Spring,
 As, from the morning's dewy flowers, it comes
 Full of their fragrance, that it is a joy
 To have it round us, and her silver voice
 Is the rich music of a summer bird,
 Heard in the still night, with its passionate cadence.

BURIAL OF THE MINNISINK

On sunny slope and beechen swell,
 The shadowed light of evening fell ;
 And, where the maple's leaf was brown,
 With soft and silent lapse came down
 The glory that the wood receives,
 At sunset, in its golden leaves.

Far upward in the mellow light
 Rose the blue hills. One cloud of white,
 Around a far uplifted cone,
 In the warm blush of evening shone ;
 An image of the silver lakes,
 By which the Indian's soul awakes.

But soon a funeral hymn was heard
 Where the soft breath of evening stirred
 The tall, gray forest ; and a band
 Of stern in heart, and strong in hand,
 Came winding down beside the wave,
 To lay the red chief in his grave.

They sang, that by his native bowers
 He stood, in the last moon of flowers,
 And thirty snows had not yet shed
 Their glory on the warrior's head ;
 But, as the summer fruit decays,
 So died he in those naked days.

A dark cloak of the roebuck's skin
 Covered the warrior, and within
 Its heavy folds the weapons, made
 For the hard toils of war, were laid ;
 The cuirass, woven of plaited reeds,
 And the broad belt of shells and beads.

Before, a dark-haired virgin train
 Chanted the death dirge of the slain ;
 Behind, the long procession came
 Of hoary men and chiefs of fame,
 With heavy hearts, and eyes of grief,
 Leading the war-horse of their chief.

Stripped of his proud and martial dress,
 Uncurbed, unreined, and riderless,
 With darting eye, and nostril spread,
 And heavy and impatient tread,
 He came ; and oft that eye so proud
 Asked for his rider in the crowd.

They buried the dark chief ; they freed
 Beside the grave his battle steed ;
 And swift an arrow cleaved its way
 To his stern heart ! One piercing neigh
 Arose, and, on the dead man's plain,
 The rider grasps his steed again.

H Y M N T O T H E N I G H T

'Αστασιη, τριλλιστος

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
 Sweep through her marble halls !
 I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
 From the celestial walls !

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
 Stoop o'er me from above ;
 The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
 As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
 The manifold, soft chimes,
 That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
 Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
 My spirit drank repose ;

The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!

Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailor,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
'I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.'

'Last night, the moon had a golden ring
And to-night no moon we see!'
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

'Come hither ! come hither ! my little daughter,
 And do not tremble so ;
 For I can weather the roughest gale
 That ever wind did blow.'

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
 Against the stinging blast ;
 He cut a rope from a broken spar,
 And bound her to the mast.

'O father ! I hear the church-bells ring,
 Oh say, what may it be ?'
 "T is a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast !' —
 And he steered for the open sea.

'O father ! I hear the sound of guns,
 Oh say, what may it be ?'
 'Some ship in distress, that cannot live
 In such an angry sea !'

'O father ! I see a gleaming light,
 Oh say, what may it be ?'
 But the father answered never a word,
 A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
 With his face turned to the skies,
 The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
 On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
 That savèd she might be ;
 And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
 On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
 Through the whistling sleet and snow,
 Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
 Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
 A sound came from the land ;
 It was the sound of the trampling surf
 On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
 She drifted a dreary wreck,
 And a whooping billow swept the crew
 Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
 Looked soft as carded wool,
 But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
 Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
 With the masts went by the board ;
 Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
 Ho ! ho ! the breakers roared !

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
 A fisherman stood aghast,
 To see the form of a maiden fair,
 Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
 The salt tears in her eyes ;
 And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,
 On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
 In the midnight and the snow !
 Christ save us all from a death like this,
 On the reef of Norman's Woe !

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

Speak ! speak ! thou fearful guest !
 Who, with thy hollow breast
 Still in rude armor drest,
 Comest to daunt me !
 Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
 But with thy fleshless palms
 Stretched, as if asking alms,
 Why dost thou haunt me ?

Then, from those cavernous eyes
 Pale flashes seemed to rise,
 As when the Northern skies
 Gleam in December ;
 And, like the water's flow
 Under December's snow,
 Came a dull voice of woe
 From the heart's chamber.

'I was a Viking old !
 My deeds, though manifold,
 No Skald in song has told,
 No Saga taught thee !

Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

'Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
 Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
 Trembled to walk on.

'Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
 Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
 Sang from the meadow.

'But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
 With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
 By our stern orders.

'Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
 Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
 Filled to o'erflowing.

'Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
 Burning yet tender:
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,

On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

‘I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest’s shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

‘Bright in her father’s hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory ;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter’s hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

‘While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

‘She was a Prince’s child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded !
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew’s flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded ?

‘Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen !
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

'Then launched they to the blast,
 Bent like a reed each mast,
 Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us;
 And with a sudden flaw
 Came round the gusty Skaw,
 So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

'And as to catch the gale
 Round veered the flapping sail,
 "Death!" was the helmsman's hail,
 "Death without quarter!"
 Mid-ships with iron keel
 Struck we her ribs of steel;
 Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

'As with his wings aslant,
 Sails with fierce cormorant,
 Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,—
 So toward the open main,
 Beating to sea again,
 Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

'Three weeks we westward bore,
 And when the storm was o'er,
 Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward;
 There for my lady's bower
 Built I the lofty tower,
 Which, to this very hour,
 Stands looking seaward.

'There lived we many years;
 Time dried the maiden's tears;
 She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother;
 Death closed her mild blue eyes,
 Under that tower she lies;
 Ne'er shall the sun arise
 On such another!

'Still grew my bosom then,
 Still as a stagnant fen!

Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hateful !
 In the vast forest here,
 Clad in my warlike gear,
 Fell I upon my spear,
 Oh, death was grateful !

'Thus, seamed with many scars,
 Bursting these prison bars,
 Up to its native stars
 My soul ascended !
 There from the flowing bowl
 Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal! to the Northland ! *skoal!*'
 Thus the tale ended.

SERENADE

FROM 'THE SPANISH STUDENT'

Stars of the summer night !
 Far in yon azure deeps,
 Hide, hide your golden light !
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

Moon of the summer night !
 Far down yon western steeps,
 Sink, sink in silver light !
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

Wind of the summer night !
 Where yonder woodbine creeps,
 Fold, fold thy pinions light !
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

Dreams of the summer night !
 Tell her, her lover keeps
 Watch ! while in slumbers light
 She sleeps !
 My lady sleeps !
 Sleeps !

ENDYMION

The rising moon has hid the stars ;
Her level rays, like golden bars,
Lie on the landscape green,
With shadows brown between.

And silver white the river gleams,
As if Diana, in her dreams
Had dropt her silver bow
Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this,
She woke Endymion with a kiss,
When, sleeping in the grove,
He dreamed not of her love.

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself, but is not bought ;
Nor voice, nor sound betrays
Its deep, impassioned gaze.

It comes, — the beautiful, the free,
The crown of all humanity, —
In silence and alone
To seek the elected one.

It lifts the boughs, whose shadows deep
Are Life's oblivion, the soul's sleep,
And kisses the closed eyes
Of him who slumbering lies.

O weary hearts ! O slumbering eyes !
O drooping souls, whose destinies
Are fraught with fear and pain,
Ye shall be loved again !

No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own.

Responds, — as if with unseen wings,
An angel touched its quivering strings ;
And whispers, in its song,
'Where hast thou stayed so long ?'

THE RAINY DAY

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
 It rains, and the wind is never weary;
 The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
 But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
 And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
 It rains, and the wind is never weary;
 My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
 But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
 And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
 Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
 Thy fate is the common fate of all,
 Into each life some rain must fall,
 Some days must be dark and dreary.

MAIDENHOOD

Maiden! with the meek, brown eyes,
 In whose orbs a shadow lies
 Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,
 Golden tresses, wreathed in one,
 As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,
 Where the brook and river meet,
 Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,
 On the brooklet's swift advance,
 On the river's broad expanse!

Deep and still, that gliding stream
 Beautiful to thee must seem,
 As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,
 When bright angels in thy vision
 Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,
 As the dove, with startled eye,
 Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hearest thou voices on the shore,
That our ears perceive no more,
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

Oh, thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands, — Life hath snares!
Care and age come unawares!

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough, where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many-numbered; —
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,
When the young heart overflows,
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth.

Oh, that dew, like balm, shall steal
Into wounds that cannot heal,
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

And that smile, like sunshine, dart
Into many a sunless heart,
For a smile of God thou art.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;

Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
 Once more a king he strode ;
 And heard the tinkling caravans
 Descend the mountain road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
 Among her children stand ;
 They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
 They held him by the hand ! —
 A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
 And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
 Along the Niger's bank ;
 His bridle-reins were golden chains,
 And, with a martial clank,
 At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
 Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
 The bright flamingoes flew ;
 From morn till night he followed their flight,
 O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
 Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
 And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
 And the hyena scream,
 And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
 Beside some hidden stream ;
 And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
 Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
 Shouted of liberty ;
 And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
 With a voice so wild and free,
 That he started in his sleep and smiled
 At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
 Nor the burning heat of day ;
 For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
 And his lifeless body lay
 A worn-out fetter, that the soul
 Had broken and thrown away !

THE DAY IS DONE

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist :

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor ;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
 The poem of thy choice,
 And lend to the rhyme of the poet
 The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
 And the cares, that infest the day,
 Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
 And as silently steal away.

SEAWEED

When descends on the Atlantic
 The gigantic
 Storm-wind of the equinox,
 Landward in his wrath he scourges
 The toiling surges,
 Laden with seaweed from the rocks :

From Bermuda's reefs ; from edges
 Of sunken ledges,
 In some far-off, bright Azore ;
 From Bahama, and the dashing,
 Silver-flashing
 Surges of San Salvador ;

From the tumbling surf, that buries
 The Orkneyan skerries,
 Answering the hoarse Hebrides ;
 And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
 Spars, uplifting
 On the desolate, rainy seas ; —

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
 On the shifting
 Currents of the restless main ;
 Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
 Of sandy beaches,
 All have found repose again.

So when storms of wild emotion
 Strike the ocean
 Of the poet's soul, ere long
 From each cave and rocky fastness,
 In its vastness,
 Floats some fragment of a song :

From the far-off isles enchanted,
 Heaven has planted
 With the golden fruit of Truth ;
 From the flashing surf, whose vision
 Gleams Elysian
 In the tropic clime of Youth ;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor
 That forever
 Wrestle with the tides of Fate ;
 From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
 Tempest-shattered,
 Floating waste and desolate ; —

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
 On the shifting
 Currents of the restless heart ;
 Till at length in books recorded,
 They, like hoarded
 Household words, no more depart.

CURFEW

I

Solemnly, mournfully,
 Dealing its dole,
 The Curfew Bell
 Is beginning to toll.

Cover the embers,
 And put out the light ;
 Toil comes with the morning,
 And rest with the night.

Dark grow the windows,
 And quenched is the fire ;
 Sound fades into silence, —
 All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,
 No sound in the hall !
 Sleep and oblivion
 Reign over all !

II

The book is completed,
 And closed, like the day ;

And the hand that has written it
 Lays it away.

Dim grow its fancies ;
 Forgotten they lie ;
 Like coals in the ashes,
 They darken and die.

Song sinks into silence,
 The story is told,
 The windows are darkened,
 The hearth-stone is cold.

Darker and darker
 The black shadows fall ;
 Sleep and oblivion
 Reign over all.

THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

‘Build me straight, O worthy Master !
 Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
 That shall laugh at all disaster,
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !’

The merchant’s word
 Delighted the Master heard ;
 For his heart was in his work, and the heart
 Giveth grace unto every Art.
 A quiet smile played round his lips,
 As the eddies and dimples of the tide
 Play round the bows of ships
 That steadily at anchor ride.
 And with a voice that was full of glee,
 He answered, ‘Ere long we will launch
 A vessel as goodly, and strong, and stanch,
 As ever weathered a wintry sea !’
 And first with nicest skill and art,
 Perfect and finished in every part,
 A little model the Master wrought,
 Which should be to the larger plan
 What the child is to the man,
 Its counterpart in miniature ;
 That with a hand more swift and sure
 The greater labor might be brought
 To answer to his inward thought.

And as he labored, his mind ran o'er
The various ships that were built of yore,
And above them all, and strangest of all
Tower'd the Great Harry, crank and tall,
Whose picture was hanging on the wall,
With bows and stern raised high in air,
And balconies hanging here and there,
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,
And eight round towers, like those that frown
From some old castle, looking down
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.
And he said with a smile, 'Our ship, I wis,
Shall be of another form than this !'
It was of another form, indeed ;
Built for freight, and yet for speed,
A beautiful and gallant craft ;
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,
Pressing down upon sail and mast,
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm ;
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft
With graceful curve and slow degrees,
That she might be docile to the helm,
And that the currents of parted seas,
Closing behind, with mighty force,
Might aid and not impede her course.

In the ship-yard stood the Master,
With the model of the vessel,
That should laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around ;
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees ;
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke !
Ah ! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in motion !
There 's not a ship that sails the ocean,
But every climate, every soil,
Must bring its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall !

The sun was rising o'er the sea,
 And long the level shadows lay,
 As if they, too, the beams would be
 Of some great, airy argosy,
 Framed and launched in a single day.
 That silent architect, the sun,
 Had hewn and laid them every one,
 Ere the work of man was yet begun.
 Beside the Master, when he spoke,
 A youth, against an anchor leaning,
 Listened, to catch his slightest meaning,
 Only the long waves, as they broke
 In ripples on the pebbly beach,
 Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,
 The old man and the fiery youth !
 The old man, in whose busy brain
 Many a ship that sailed the main
 Was modelled o'er and o'er again ;
 The fiery youth, who was to be
 The heir of his dexterity,
 The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,
 When he had built and launched from land
 What the elder head had planned.

'Thus,' said he, 'will we build this ship !
 Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
 And follow well this plan of mine.
 Choose the timbers with greatest care ;
 Of all that is unsound beware ;
 For only what is sound and strong
 To this vessel shall belong.
 Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine
 Here together shall combine.
 A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,
 And the UNION be her name !
 For the day that gives her to the sea
 Shall give my daughter unto thee !'

The Master's word
 Enraptured the young man heard ;
 And as he turned his face aside,
 With a look of joy and a thrill of pride
 Standing before
 Her father's door,
 He saw the form of his promised bride.

The sun shone on her golden hair,
And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,
With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.
Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach ;
But he
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea !
Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love's command !
It is the heart, and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest !

Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the ship-yard's bounds
Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, plied
With vigorous arms on every side ;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along
The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy, every one
Who sees his labor well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied,
By idly waiting for time and tide !

And when the hot, long day was o'er,
The young man at the Master's door
Sat with the maiden calm and still,
And within the porch, a little more
Removed beyond the evening chill,
The father sat, and told them tales
Of wrecks in the great September gales,
Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,
And ships that never came back again,
The chance and change of a sailor's life,
Want and plenty, rest and strife,
His roving fancy, like the wind,
That nothing can stay and nothing can bind,
And the magic charm of foreign lands,

With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
 Where the tumbling surf,
 O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,
 Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,
 As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.
 And the trembling maiden held her breath
 At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,
 With all its terror and mystery,
 The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,
 That divides and yet unites mankind !
 And whenever the old man paused, a gleam
 From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illumine
 The silent group in the twilight gloom,
 And thoughtful faces, as in a dream ;
 And for a moment one might mark
 What had been hidden by the dark,
 That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
 Tenderly, on the young man's breast !

Day by day the vessel grew,
 With timbers fashioned strong and true,
 Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,
 Till, framed with perfect symmetry,
 A skeleton ship rose up to view !
 And around the bows and along the side
 The heavy hammers and mallets plied,
 Till after many a week, at length,
 Wonderful for form and strength,
 Sublime in its enormous bulk,
 Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk !
 And around it columns of smoke, upwreathing,
 Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething
 Caldron, that glowed,
 And overflowed
 With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.
 And amid the clamors
 Of clattering hammers,
 He who listened heard now and then
 The song of the Master and his men : —

‘Build me straight, O worthy Master,
 Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
 That shall laugh at all disaster,
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !’

With oaken brace and copper band,
 Lay the rudder on the sand,

That, like a thought, should have control
Over the movement of the whole ;
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand
Would reach down and grapple with the land,
And immovable and fast
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast !
And at the bows an image stood,
By a cunning artist carved in wood,
With robes of white, that far behind
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
It was not shaped in a classic mould,
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
Or Naiad rising from the water,
But modelled from the Master's daughter !
On many a dreary and misty night,
'T will be seen by the rays of the signal light,
Speeding along through the rain and the dark,
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,
The pilot of some phantom bark,
Guiding the vessel, in its flight
By a path none other knows aright !

Behold, at last,
Each tall and tapering mast
Is swung into its place ;
Shrouds and stays
Holding it firm and fast !

Long ago,
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
When upon mountain and plain
Lay the snow,
They fell, — those lordly pines !
Those grand, majestic pines !
'Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall,
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And naked and bare,
To feel the stress and the strain
Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them forevermore
Of their native forests they should not see again.

And everywhere
 The slender, graceful spars
 Poise aloft in the air,
 And at the mast-head,
 White, blue, and red,
 A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.
 Ah ! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,
 In foreign harbors shall behold
 That flag unrolled,
 'T will be as a friendly hand
 Stretched out from his native land,
 Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless !

All is finished ! and at length
 Has come the bridal day
 Of beauty and of strength.
 To-day the vessel shall be launched !
 With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
 And o'er the bay,
 Slowly, in all his splendors dight,
 The great sun rises to behold the sight.
 The ocean old,
 Centuries old,
 Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
 Paces restless to and fro,
 Up and down the sands of gold.
 His beating heart is not at rest ;
 And far and wide,
 With ceaseless flow,
 His beard of snow
 Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
 He waits impatient for his bride.
 There she stands,
 With her foot upon the sands,
 Decked with flags and streamers gay,
 In honor of her marriage day,
 Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
 Round her like a veil descending,
 Ready to be
 The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride
 Is standing by her lover's side.
 Shadows from the flags and shrouds,
 Like the shadows cast by clouds,
 Broken by many a sudden fleck,

Fall around them on the deck.
The prayer is said,
The service read,
The joyous bridegroom bows his head ;
And in tears the good old Master
Shakes the brown hand of his son
Kissing his daughter's glowing cheek
In silence, for he cannot speak,
And ever faster
Down his own the tears begin to run.
The worthy pastor —
The shepherd of that wandering flock,
That has the ocean for its wold,
That has the vessel for its fold,
Leaping ever from rock to rock —
Spake, with accents mild and clear,
Words of warning, words of cheer,
But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.
He knew the chart
Of the sailor's heart,
All its pleasures and its griefs,
All its shallows and rocky reefs,
All those secret currents, that flow
With such resistless undertow,
And lift and drift, with terrible force,
The will from its moorings and its course.
Therefore he spake, and thus said he : —
'Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah ! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah ! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,

We shall sail securely, and safely reach
 The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
 The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
 Will be those of joy and not of fear !'

Then the Master,
 With a gesture of command,
 Waved his hand;
 And at the word,
 Loud and sudden there was heard,
 All around them and below,
 The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs.
 And see ! she stirs !
 She starts, — she moves, — she seems to feel
 The thrill of life along her keel,
 And, spurning with her foot the ground,
 With one exulting, joyous bound,
 She leaps into the ocean's arms !

And lo ! from the assembled crowd
 There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,
 That to the ocean seemed to say,
 'Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,
 Take her to thy protecting arms,
 With all her youth and all her charms !'

How beautiful she is ! How fair
 She lies within those arms, that press
 Her form with many a soft caress
 Of tenderness and watchful care !
 Sail forth into the sea, O ship !
 Through wind and wave, right onward steer !
 The moistened eye, the trembling lip,
 Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,
 O gentle, loving, trusting wife,
 And safe from all adversity
 Upon the bosom of that sea
 Thy comings and thy goings be !
 For gentleness and love and trust
 Prevail o'er angry wave and gust ;
 And in the wreck of noble lives
 Something immortal still survives !

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
 Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
 Humanity with all its fears,
 With all the hopes of future years,
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
 We know what Master laid thy keel,
 What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
 Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
 What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
 In what a forge and what a heat
 Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
 Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
 'T is of the wave and not the rock ;
 'T is but the flapping of the sail,
 And not a rent made by the gale !
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
 In spite of false lights on the shore,
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
 Are all with thee, — are all with thee !

MY LOST YOUTH

Often I think of the beautiful town
 That is seated by the sea ;
 Often in thought go up and down
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
 And my youth comes back to me.
 And a verse of a Lapland song
 Is haunting my memory still :
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'
 I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
 And catch, in sudden gleams,
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
 And islands that were the Hesperides
 Of all my boyish dreams.
 And the burden of that old song,
 It murmurs and whispers still :
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'
 I remember the black wharves and the slips,
 And the sea-tides tossing free ;

And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.

And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak ;
 There are dreams that cannot die ;
 There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,
 And a mist before the eye.
 And the words of that fatal song
 Come over me like a chill :
 ‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
 When I visit the dear old town ;
 But the native air is pure and sweet,
 And the trees that o’ershadow each well-known street,
 As they balance up and down,
 Are singing the beautiful song,
 Are sighing and whispering still :
 ‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

And Deering’s Woods are fresh and fair,
 And with joy that is almost pain
 My heart goes back to wander there,
 And among the dreams of the days that were,
 I find my lost youth again.
 And the strange and beautiful song,
 The groves are repeating it still :
 ‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

D A Y B R E A K

A wind came up out of the sea,
 And said, ‘O mists, make room for me.’

It hailed the ships, and cried, ‘Sail on,
 Ye mariners, the night is gone.’

And hurried landward far away,
 Crying, ‘Awake ! it is the day.’

It said unto the forest, ‘Shout !
 Hang all your leafy banners out !’

It touched the wood-bird’s folded wing,
 And said, ‘O bird, awake and sing.’

And o'er the farms, 'O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near.'

It whispered to the fields of corn,
'Bow down, and hail the coming morn.'

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
'Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour.'

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, 'Not yet! in quiet lie.'

DIVINA COMMEDIA

I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
 Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine !
 And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
 The air is filled with some unknown perfume ;
 The congregation of the dead make room
 For thee to pass ; the votive tapers shine ;
 Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
 The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
 From the confessionals I hear arise
 Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
 And lamentations from the crypts below ;
 And then a voice celestial that begins
 With the pathetic words, 'Although your sins
 As scarlet be,' and ends with 'as the snow.'

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
 She stands before thee, who so long ago
 Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
 From which thy song and all its splendors came ;
 And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
 The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
 On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
 Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
 Thou makest full confession ; and a gleam,
 As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
 Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase ;
 Lethe and Eunoë — the remembered dream
 And the forgotten sorrow — bring at last
 That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
 With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
 Here martyred and hereafter glorified ;
 And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
 Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
 With splendor upon splendor multiplied ;
 And Beatrice again at Dante's side
 No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
 And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
 Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
 And benedictions of the Holy Ghost ;

And the melodious bells among the spires
 O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above
 Proclaim the elevation of the Host !

VI

O star of morning and of liberty !
 O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
 Above the darkness of the Apennines,
 Forerunner of the day that is to be !
 The voices of the city and the sea,
 The voices of the mountains and the pines,
 Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
 Are footpaths for the thought of Italy !
 Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,
 Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
 As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
 Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
 In their own language hear the wondrous word,
 And many are amazed and many doubt.

CHAUCER

An old man in a lodge within a park ;
 The chamber walls depicted all around
 With portraiture of huntsman, hawk, and hound,
 And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
 Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
 Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound ;
 He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
 Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
 He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
 The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
 Made beautiful with song ; and as I read
 I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
 Of lark and linnet, and from every page
 Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

SHAKESPEARE

A vision as of crowded city streets,
 With human life in endless overflow ;
 Thunder of thoroughfares ; trumpets that blow
 To battle ; clamor, in obscure retreats,
 Of sailors landed from their anchored fleets ;

Tolling of bells in turrets, and below
 Voices of children, and bright flowers that throw
 O'er garden walls their intermingled sweets !
 This vision comes to me when I unfold
 The volume of the Poet paramount,
 Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone ; —
 Into his hands they put the lyre of gold,
 And, crowned with sacred laurel at their font,
 Placed him as Musagetes on their throne.

MILTON

I pace the sounding sea-beach and behold
 How the voluminous billows roll and run,
 Upheaving and subsiding, while the sun
 Shines through their sheeted emerald far unrolled,
 And the ninth wave, slow gathering fold by fold
 All its loose-flowing garments into one,
 Plunges upon the shore, and floods the dun
 Pale reach of sands, and changes them to gold.
 So in majestic cadence rise and fall
 The mighty undulations of thy song,
 O sightless bard, England's Mæonides !
 And ever and anon, high over all
 Uplifted, a ninth wave superb and strong,
 Floods all the soul with its melodious seas.

KEATS

The young Endymion sleeps Endymion's sleep ;
 The shepherd-boy whose tale was left half told !
 The solemn grove uplifts its shield of gold
 To the red rising moon, and loud and deep
 The nightingale is singing from the steep ;
 It is midsummer, but the air is cold ;
 Can it be death ? Alas, beside the fold
 A shepherd's pipe lies shattered near his sheep.
 Lo ! in the moonlight gleams a marble white,
 On which I read : 'Here lieth one whose name
 Was writ in water.' And was this the meed
 Of his sweet singing ? Rather let me write :
 'The smoking flax before it burst to flame
 Was quenched by death, and broken the bruised reed.'

John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892]

THE FAREWELL

OF A VIRGINIA SLAVE MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTERS SOLD INTO SOUTHERN BONDAGE

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,
Where the noisome insect stings,
Where the fever demon strews
Poison with the falling dews,
Where the sickly sunbeams glare
Through the hot and misty air ;
Gone, gone — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters ;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
There no mother's eye is near them,
There no mother's ear can hear them ;
Never, when the torturing lash
Seams their back with many a gash,
Shall a mother's kindness bless them,
Or a mother's arms caress them.
Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters ;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Oh, when weary, sad, and slow,
From the fields at night they go,
Faint with toil, and racked with pain,
To their cheerless homes again,
There no brother's voice shall greet them,
There no father's welcome meet them.
Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters ;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
From the tree whose shadow lay
On their childhood's place of play ;
From the cool spring where they drank ;
Rock, and hill, and rivulet bank ;
From the solemn house of prayer,
And the holy counsels there ;
Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters ;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone ;
Toiling through the weary day,
And at night the spoiler's prey.
Oh, that they had earlier died,
Sleeping calmly, side by side,
Where the tyrant's power is o'er,
And the fetter galls no more !
Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters ;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
By the holy love He beareth ;
By the bruised reed He spareth ;
Oh, may He, to whom alone
All their cruel wrongs are known,
Still their hope and refuge prove,
With a more than mother's love.
Gone, gone, — sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters ;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

HAMPTON BEACH

The sunlight glitters keen and bright,
Where, miles away,
Lies stretching to my dazzled sight
A luminous belt, a misty light,
Beyond the dark pine bluffs and wastes of sandy gray.

The tremulous shadow of the Sea !
Against its ground
Of silvery light, rock, hill, and tree,
Still as a picture, clear and free,
With varying outline mark the coast for miles around.

On — on — we tread with loose-flung rein
Our seaward way,
Through dark-green fields and blossoming grain,
Where the wild brier-rose skirts the lane,
And bends above our heads the flowering locust spray.

Ha ! like a kind hand on my brow
Come this fresh breeze,
Cools its dull and feverish glow,
While through my being seems to flow
The breath of a new life, the healing of the seas !

Now rest we, where this grassy mound
His feet hath set
In the great waters, which have bound
His granite ankles greenly round
With long and tangled moss, and weeds with cool spray wet.

Good-by to Pain and Care ! I take
Mine ease to-day :
Here where these sunny waters break,
And ripples this keen breeze, I shake
All burdens from the heart, all weary thoughts away.

I draw a freer breath, I seem
Like all I see —
Waves in the sun, the white-winged gleam
Of sea-birds in the slanting beam,
And far-off sails which flit before the southwind free.

So when Time's veil shall fall asunder,
The soul may know
No fearful change, nor sudden wonder,
Nor sink the weight of mystery under,
But with the upward rise, and with the vastness grow.

And all we shrink from now may seem
No new revealing ;
Familiar as our childhood's stream,
Or pleasant memory of a dream
The loved and cherished Past upon the new life stealing.

Serene and mild the untried light
May have its dawning ;
And, as in summer's northern night
The evening and the dawn unite,
The sunset hues of Time blend with the soul's new morning.

I sit alone ; in foam and spray
Wave after wave
Breaks on the rocks which, stern and gray,
Shoulder the broken tide away,
Or murmurs hoarse and strong through mossy cleft and cave.

What heed I of the dusty land
And noisy town ?
I see the mighty deep expand
From its white line of glimmering sand
To where the blue of heaven on bluer waves shuts down !

In listless quietude of mind,
I yield to all
The change of cloud and wave and wind ;
And passive on the flood reclined,
I wander with the waves, and with them rise and fall.

But look, thou dreamer ! wave and shore
In shadow lie ;
The night-wind warns me back once more
To where, my native hill-tops o'er,
Bends like an arch of fire the glowing sunset sky.

So then, beach, bluff, and wave, farewell !
I bear with me
No token stone nor glittering shell,
But long and oft shall Memory tell
Of this brief thoughtful hour of musing by the Sea.

THE SHOEMAKERS

Ho ! workers of the old time styled
The Gentle Craft of Leather !
Young brothers of the ancient guild,
Stand forth once more together !
Call out again your long array,
In the olden merry manner !
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,
Fling out your blazoned banner !

Rap, rap ! upon the well-worn stone
 How falls the polished hammer !
 Rap, rap ! the measured sound has grown
 A quick and merry clamor.
 Now shape the sole ! now deftly curl
 The glossy vamp around it,
 And bless the while the bright-eyed girl
 Whose gentle fingers bound it !

For you, along the Spanish main
 A hundred keels are ploughing,
 For you, the Indian on the plain
 His lasso-coil is throwing ;
 For you, deep glens with hemlock dark
 The woodman's fire is lighting ;
 For you, upon the oak's gray bark,
 The woodman's axe is smiting.

For you, from Carolina's pine
 The rosin-gum is stealing ;
 For you, the dark-eyed Florentine
 Her silken skein is reeling ;
 For you, the dizzy goatherd roams
 His rugged Alpine ledges ;
 For you, round all her shepherd homes,
 Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,
 On moated mound or heather,
 Where'er the need of trampled right
 Brought toiling men together ;
 Where the free burghers from the wall
 Defied the mail-clad master,
 Than yours, at Freedom's trumpet-call,
 No craftsmen rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
 Ye heed no idle scorner ;
 Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
 And duty done your honor.
 Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,
 The jury Time empanels,
 And leave to truth each noble name
 Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,
In strong and hearty German ;
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,
And patriot fame of Sherman ;
Still from his book, a mystic seer,
The soul of Behmen teaches,
And England's priestcraft shakes to hear
Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The foot is yours ; where'er it falls,
It treads your well-wrought leather,
On earthen floor, in marble halls,
On carpet, or on heather.
Still there the sweetest charm is found
Of matron grace or vestal's,
As Hebe's foot bore nectar round
Among the old celestials !

Rap, rap ! — your stout and bluff brogan,
With footsteps slow and weary,
May wander where the sky's blue span
Shuts down upon the prairie.
On Beauty's foot your slippers glance,
By Saratoga's fountains,
Or twinkle down the summer dance
Beneath the Crystal Mountains !

The red brick to the mason's hand,
The brown earth to the tiller's,
The shoe in yours shall wealth command,
Like fairy Cinderella's !
As they who shunned the household maid
Beheld the crown upon her,
So all shall see your toil repaid
With hearth and home and honor.

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,
In water cool and brimming, —
'All honor to the good old Craft,
Its merry men and women !'
Call out again your long array,
In the old time's pleasant manner :
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,
Fling out his blazoned banner !

THE HUSKERS

It was late in mild October, and the long autumnal rain
 Had left the summer harvest-fields all green with grass again ;
 The first sharp frosts had fallen, leaving all the woodlands gay
 With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the meadow-flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the sun rose broad and red,
 At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened as he sped ;
 Yet even his noontide glory fell chastened and subdued,
 On the cornfields and the orchards and softly pictured wood.

And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping to the night,
 He wove with golden shuttle the haze with yellow light ;
 Slanting through the painted beeches, he glorified the hill ;
 And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay brighter, greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts caught glimpses of that sky,
 Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and laughed, they knew not
 why ;
 And school-girls, gay with aster-flowers, beside the meadow brooks,
 Mingled the glow of autumn with the sunshine of sweet looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the patient weathercocks ;
 But even the birches on the hill stood motionless as rocks.
 No sound was in the woodlands, save the squirrel's dropping shell,
 And the yellow leaves among the boughs, low rustling as they fell.

The summer grains were harvested ; the stubble-fields lay dry,
 Where June winds rolled, in light and shade, the pale green waves
 of rye ;
 But still, on gentle hill-slopes, in valleys fringed with wood,
 Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy corn crop stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain, through husks that, dry and
 sere,
 Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone out the yellow ear ;
 Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many a verdant fold,
 And glistened in the slanting light the pumpkin's sphere of gold.

There wrought the busy harvesters ; and many a creaking wain
 Bore slowly to the long barn-floor its load of husk and grain ;
 Till broad and red, as when he rose, the sun sank down, at last,
 And like a merry guest's farewell, the day in brightness passed.

And lo! as through the western pines, on meadow, stream, and pond,

Flamed the red radiance of a sky, set all afire beyond,
Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder glory shone,
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled into one!

As thus into the quiet night the twilight lapsed away,
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil shadows lay;
From many a brown old farm-house, and hamlet without name,
Their milking and their home-tasks done, the merry huskers came.

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from pitchforks in the mow,
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant scene below;
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden ears before,
And laughing eyes and busy hands and brown cheeks glimmering
o'er.

Half hidden, in a quiet nook, serene of look and heart,
Talking their old times over, the old men sat apart;
While up and down the unhusked pile, or nestling in its shade,
At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the happy children played.

Urged by the good host's daughter, a maiden young and fair,
Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and pride of soft brown hair,
The master of the village school, sleek of hair and smooth of tongue,
To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a husking-ballad sung.

THE CORN SONG

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard!

Heap high the golden corn!

No richer gift has Autumn poured

From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean

The apple from the pine,

The orange from its glossy green,

The cluster from the vine;

We better love the hardy gift

Our rugged vales bestow,

To cheer us when the storm shall drift

Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers

Our ploughs their furrows made,

While on the hills the sun and showers
Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain
Beneath the sun of May,
And frightened from our sprouting grain
The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June
Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with autumn's moonlit eves,
Its harvest-time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
And bear the treasure home.

There, when the snows about us drift,
And winter winds are cold,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk
Around their costly board ;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
By homespun beauty poured !

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth
Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
And bless our farmer girls !

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
Whose folly laughs to scorn
The blessing of our hardy grain,
Our wealth of golden corn !

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
The wheat-field to the fly :

But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod ;
Still let us, for his golden corn,
Send up our thanks to God !

PROEM

I love the old melodious lays
 Which softly melt the ages through,
 The songs of Spenser's golden days,
 Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
 Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
 To breathe their marvellous notes I try ;
 I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
 In silence feel the dewy showers,
 And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
 The harshness of an untaught ear,
 The jarring words of one whose rhyme
 Beat often Labor's hurried time,
 Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
 No rounded art the lack supplies ;
 Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
 Or softer shades of Nature's face,
 I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
 The secrets of the heart and mind ;
 To drop the plummet-line below
 Our common world of joy and woe,
 A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
 Of human right and weal is shown ;
 A hate of tyranny intense,
 And hearty in its vehemence,
 As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

O Freedom ! if to me belong
 Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
 Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
 Still with a love as deep and strong
 As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine !

ICHABOD

So fallen ! so lost ! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore !
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore !

Revile him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all ;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath
Befit his fall !

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn ! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven !

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains ;
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone ; from those great eyes
The soul has fled :
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead !

Then pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame ;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame !

BENEDICITE

God's love and peace be with thee, where
Soe'er this soft autumnal air
Lifts the dark tresses of thy hair !

Whether through city casements comes
Its kiss to thee, in crowded rooms,
Or, out among the woodland blooms,

It freshens o'er thy thoughtful face,
Imparting, in its glad embrace,
Beauty to beauty, grace to grace !

Fair Nature's book together read,
The old wood-paths that knew our tread,
The maple shadows overhead, —

The hills we climbed, the river seen
By gleams along its deep ravine, —
All keep thy memory fresh and green.

Where'er I look, where'er I stray,
Thy thought goes with me on my way,
And hence the prayer I breathe to-day ;

O'er lapse of time and change of scene,
The weary waste which lies between
Thyself and me, my heart I lean.

Thou lack'st not Friendship's spell-word, nor
The half-unconscious power to draw
All hearts to thine by Love's sweet law.

With these good gifts of God is cast
Thy lot, and many a charm thou hast
To hold the blessed angels fast.

If, then, a fervent wish for thee
The gracious heavens will heed from me,
What should, dear heart, its burden be ?

The sighing of a shaken reed, —
What can I more than meekly plead
The greatness of our common need ?

God's love, — unchanging, pure, and true, —
The Paraclete white-shining through
His peace, — the fall of Hermon's dew !

With such a prayer, on this sweet day,
As thou mayst hear and I may say,
I greet thee, dearest, far away !

MAUD MULLER

Maud Muller on a summer's day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast, —

A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

'Thanks !' said the Judge ; 'a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed.'

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees ;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,
And her graceful ankles bare and brown;

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: ‘Ah me!
That I the Judge’s bride might be!

‘He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

‘My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.

‘I’d dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

‘And I’d feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door.’

The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

‘A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne’er hath it been my lot to meet.

‘And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair.

‘Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay;

‘No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

‘But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words.’

But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise.

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
'Ah, that I were free again!

'Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay.'

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein;

And, gazing down with timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls ;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, 'It might have been.'

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,
For rich repiner and household drudge !

God pity them both ! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these : 'It might have been !'

Ah, well ! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes ;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away !

THE BAREFOOT BOY

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan !
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes ;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill ;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace ;
From my heart I give thee joy, —
I was once a barefoot boy !
Prince thou art, — the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride !
Barefoot, trudging at his side,

Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye, —
Outward sunshine, inward joy :
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy !
Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood ;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well ;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung ;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine ;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans !
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks ;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy, —
Blessings on the barefoot boy !

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees ;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade ;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone ;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall ;

Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides !
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too ;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy !

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread ;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude !
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold ;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra ;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch : pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy !

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can !
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-spearèd the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew ;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat :
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil :
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground ;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah ! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy !

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
 Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
 On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
 Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,
 Witch astride of a human back,
 Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
 The strangest ride that ever was sped
 Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead !
 Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead !

Body of turkey, head of owl,
 Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
 Feathered and ruffled in every part,
 Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
 Scores of women, old and young,
 Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
 Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
 Shouting and singing the shrill refrain :
 ‘Here’s Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
 Torr’d an’ futherr’d an’ corr’d in a corrt
 By the women o’ Morble’ead !’

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
 Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
 Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
 Bacchus round some antique vase,
 Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
 Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
 With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns’ twang,
 Over and over the Mænads sang :
 ‘Here’s Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
 Torr’d an’ futherr’d an’ corr’d in a corrt
 By the women o’ Morble’ead !’

Small pity for him ! — He sailed away
 From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay,—
 Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
 With his own town’s-people on her deck !
 ‘Lay by ! lay by !’ they called to him.
 Back he answered, ‘Sink or swim !
 Brag of your catch of fish again !’
 And off he sailed through the fog and rain !

Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead !

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea, —
Looked for the coming that might not be !
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away ? —
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead !

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide ;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain :
'Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead !'

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near :
'Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead !'

'Hear me, neighbors !' at last he cried, —
'What to me is this noisy ride ?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within ?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck !

Hate me and curse me,— I only dread
 The hand of God and the face of the dead !'
 Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead !

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
 Said, 'God has touched him ! why should we ?'
 Said an old wife mourning her only son,
 'Cut the rogue's tether and let him run !'
 So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
 Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
 And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
 And left him alone with his shame and sin.

Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead !

TELLING THE BEES

Here is the place ; right over the hill
 Runs the path I took ;
 You can see the gap in the old wall still,
 And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
 And the poplars tall ;
 And the barn's brown length, and the cattleyard,
 And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun ;
 And down by the brink
 Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
 Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
 Heavy and slow ;
 And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
 And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There 's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze ;
 And the June sun warm
 Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
 Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
 From my Sunday coat

I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,—
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,— the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, 'My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away.'

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
'Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!'

MY PLAYMATE

The pines were dark on Ramoth hill,
Their song was soft and low;
The blossoms in the sweet May wind
Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet,
 The orchard birds sang clear;
 The sweetest and the saddest day
 It seemed of all the year.

For, more to me than birds or flowers,
 My playmate left her home.
 And took with her the laughing spring,
 The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of kith and kin,
 She laid her hand in mine:
 What more could ask the bashful boy
 Who fed her father's kine?

She left us in the bloom of May:
 The constant years told o'er
 Their seasons with as sweet May morns,
 But she came back no more.

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round
 Of uneventful years;
 Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring
 And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year
 Her summer roses blow;
 The dusky children of the sun
 Before her come and go.

There haply with her jewelled hands
 She smooths her silken gown,—
 No more the homespun lap wherein
 I shook the walnuts down.

The wild grapes wait us by the brook,
 The brown nuts on the hill,
 And still the May-day flowers make sweet
 The woods of Follymill.

The lilies blossom in the pond,
 The bird builds in the tree,
 The dark pines sing on Ramoth hill
 The slow song of the sea.

I wonder if she thinks of them,
 And how the old time seems, —

If ever the pines of Ramoth wood
Are sounding in her dreams.

I see her face, I hear her voice ;
Does she remember mine ?
And what to her is now the boy
Who fed her father's kine ?

What cares she that the orioles build
For other eyes than ours, —
That other hands with nuts are filled,
And other laps with flowers ?

O playmate in the golden time !
Our mossy seat is green,
Its fringing violets blossom yet,
The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with birch and fern
A sweeter memory blow ;
And there in spring the veeries sing
The song of long ago.

And still the pines of Ramoth wood
Are moaning like the sea, —
The moaning of the sea of change
Between myself and thee !

A M Y WENTWORTH

Her fingers shame the ivory keys
They dance so light along ;
The bloom upon her parted lips
Is sweeter than the song.

O perfumed suitor, spare thy smiles !
Her thoughts are not of thee ;
She better loves the salted wind—
The voices of the sea.

Her heart is like an outbound ship
That at its anchor swings ;
The murmur of the stranded shell
Is in the song she sings.

She sings, and, smiling, hears her praise,
But dreams the while of one

Who watches from his sea-blown deck
The icebergs in the sun.

She questions all the winds that blow,
And every fog-wreath dim,
And bids the sea-birds flying north
Bear messages to him.

She speeds them with the thanks of men
He perilled life to save,
And grateful prayers like holy oil
To smooth for him the wave.

Brown Viking of the fishing-smack
Fair toast of all the town! —
The skipper's jerkin ill beseems
The lady's silken gown!

But ne'er shall Amy Wentworth wear
For him the blush of shame
Who dares to set his manly gifts
Against her ancient name.

The stream is brightest at its spring,
And blood is not like wine;
Nor honored less than he who heirs
Is he who founds a line.

Full lightly shall the prize be won,
If love be Fortune's spur;
And never maiden stoops to him
Who lifts himself to her.

Her home is brave in Jaffrey Street,
With stately stairways worn
By feet of old Colonial knights
And ladies gentle-born.

Still green about its ample porch
The English ivy twines
Trained back to show in English oak
The herald's carven signs.

And on her, from the wainscot old,
Ancestral faces frown, —
And this has worn the soldier's sword,
And that the judge's gown.

But, strong of will and proud as they,
She walks the gallery floor
As if she trod her sailor's deck
By stormy Labrador !

The sweetbrier blooms on Kittery-side,
And green are Elliot's bowers ;
Her garden is the pebbled beach,
The mosses are her flowers.

She looks across the harbor-bar
To see the white gulls fly ;
His greeting from the Northern sea
Is in their clanging cry.

She hums a song, and dreams that he,
As in its romance old,
Shall homeward ride with silken sails
And masts of beaten gold !

Oh, rank is good, and gold is fair,
And high and low mate ill ;
But love has never known a law
Beyond its own sweet will !

THE WRECK OF RIVERMOUTH

Rivermouth Rocks are fair to see,
By dawn or sunset shone across,
When the ebb of the sea has left them free
To dry their fringes of gold-green moss :
For there the river comes winding down,
From salt sea-meadows and uplands brown,
And waves on the outer rocks afoam
Shout to its waters, 'Welcome home !'

And fair are the sunny isles in view
East of the grisly Head of the Boar,
And Agamenticus lifts its blue
Disk of a cloud the woodlands o'er ;
And southerly, when the tide is down,
'Twixt white sea-waves and sand-hills brown,
The beach-birds dance and the gray gulls wheel
Over a floor of burnished steel.

Once, in the old Colonial days,
Two hundred years ago and more,

A boat sailed down through the winding ways
 Of Hampton River to that low shore,
 Full of a goodly company
 Sailing out on the summer sea,
 Veering to catch the land-breeze light,
 With the Boar to left and the Rocks to right.

In Hampton meadows, where mowers laid
 Their scythes to the swaths of salted grass,
 'Ah, well-a-day ! our hay must be made !'

A young man sighed, who saw them pass.
 Loud laughed his fellows to see him stand
 Whetting his scythe with a listless hand,
 Hearing a voice in a far-off song,
 Watching a white hand beckoning long.

'Fie on the witch !' cried a merry girl,
 As they rounded the point where Goody Cole
 Sat by her door with her wheel atwirl,
 A bent and blear-eyed poor old soul.
 'Oho !' she muttered, 'ye 're brave to-day !
 But I hear the little waves laugh and say,
 "The broth will be cold that waits at home ;
 For it 's one to go, but another to come !"'

'She 's cursed,' said the skipper ; 'speak her fair :
 I 'm scary always to see her shake
 Her wicked head, with its wild gray hair,
 And nose like a hawk, and eyes like a snake.'
 But merrily still, with laugh and shout,
 From Hampton River the boat sailed out,
 Till the huts and the flakes on Star seemed nigh,
 And they lost the scent of the pines of Rye.

They dropped their lines in the lazy tide,
 Drawing up haddocks and mottled cod ;
 They saw not the Shadow that walked beside,
 They heard not the feet with silence shod.
 But thicker and thicker a hot mist grew,
 Shot by the lightnings through and through ;
 And muffled growls, like the growl of a beast,
 Ran along the sky from west to east.

Then the skipper looked from the darkening sea
 Up to the dimmed and wading sun ;
 But he spake like a brave man cheerily,
 'Yet there is time for our homeward run.'

Veering and tacking, they backward wore;
And just as a breath from the woods ashore
Blew out to whisper of danger past,
The wrath of the storm came down at last!

The skipper hauled at the heavy sail:
'God be our help!' he only cried,
As the roaring gale, like the stroke of a flail,
Smote the boat on its starboard side.
The Shoalsmen looked, but saw alone
Dark films of rain-cloud slantwise blown,
Wild rocks lit up by the lightning's glare,
The strife and torment of sea and air.

Goody Cole looked out from her door:
The Isles of Shoals were drowned and gone,
Scarcely she saw the Head of the Boar
Toss the foam from tusks of stone.
She clasped her hands with a grip of pain,
The tear on her cheek was not of rain:
'They are lost,' she muttered, 'boat and crew!
Lord, forgive me! my words were true!'

Suddenly seaward swept the squall;
The low sun smote through cloudy rack;
The Shoals stood clear in the light, and all
The trend of the coast lay hard and black.
But far and wide as eye could reach,
No life was seen upon wave or beach;
The boat that went out at morning never
Sailed back again into Hampton River.

O mower, lean on thy bended snath,
Look from the meadows green and low:
The wind of the sea is a waft of death,
The waves are singing a song of woe!
By silent river, by moaning sea,
Long and vain shall thy watching be:
Never again shall the sweet voice call,
Never the white hand rise and fall!

O Rivermouth Rocks, how sad a sight
Ye saw in the light of breaking day!
Dead faces looking up cold and white
From sand and seaweed where they lay.

The mad old witch-wife wailed and wept,
And cursed the tide as it backward crept:
'Crawl back, crawl back, blue water-snake!
Leave your dead for the hearts that break!'

Solemn it was in that old day
In Hampton town and its log-built church,
Where side by side the coffins lay
And the mourners stood in aisle and porch.
In the singing-seats young eyes were dim,
The voices faltered that raised the hymn,
And Father Dalton, grave and stern,
Sobbed through his prayer and wept in turn.

But his ancient colleague did not pray;
Under the weight of his fourscore years
He stood apart with the iron-gray
Of his strong brows knitted to hide his tears;
And a fair-faced woman of doubtful fame,
Linking her own with his honored name,
Subtle as sin, at his side withstood
The felt reproach of her neighborhood.

Apart with them, like them forbid,
Old Goody Cole looked drearily round,
As, two by two, with their faces hid,
The mourners walked to the burying-ground.
She let the staff from her clasped hands fall:
'Lord, forgive us! we're sinners all!'
And the voice of the old man answered her:
'Amen!' said Father Bachiler.

So, as I sat upon Appledore
In the calm of a closing summer day,
And the broken lines of Hampton shore
In purple mist of cloudland lay,
The Rivermouth Rocks their story told;
And waves aglow with sunset gold,
Rising and breaking in steady chime,
Beat the rhythm and kept the time.

And the sunset paled, and warmed once more
With a softer, tenderer after-glow;
In the east was moon-rise, with boats offshore
And sails in the distance drifting slow.

The beacon glimmered from Portsmouth bar,
The White Isle kindled its great red star;
And life and death in my old-time lay
Mingled in peace like the night and day!

S N O W - B O U N D

A WINTER IDYL

The sun that brief December day
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,
And, darkly circled, gave at noon
A sadder light than waning moon.
Slow tracing down the thickening sky
Its mute and ominous prophecy,
A portent seeming less than threat,
It sank from sight before it set.
A chill no coat, however stout,
Of homespun stuff could quite shut out,
A hard, dull bitterness of cold,
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,
The coming of the snow-storm told.
The wind blew east; we heard the roar
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores,—
Brought in the wood from out of doors,
Littered the stalls, and from the mows
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows:
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,
Impatient down the stanchion rows
The cattle shake their walnut bows;
While, peering from his early perch
Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,
The cock his crested helmet bent
And down his querulous challenge sent.

Unwarmed by any sunset light
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the wingèd snow:

And ere the early bedtime came
The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothes-line posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.

So all night long the storm roared on :
The morning broke without a sun ;
In tiny spherule traced with lines
Of Nature's geometric signs,
In starry flake, and pellicle,
All day the hoary meteor fell ;
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own.
Around the glistening wonder bent
The blue walls of the firmament,
No cloud above, no earth below, —
A universe of sky and snow !
The old familiar sights of ours
Took marvellous shapes ; strange domes and towers
Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,
Or garden-wall, or belt of wood ;
A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,
A fenceless drift what once was road ;
The bridle-post an old man sat
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat ;
The well-curb had a Chinese roof ;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,
In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath
Our father wasted : 'Boys, a path !'
Well pleased (for when did farmer boy
Count such a summons less than joy?)
Our buskins on our feet we drew ;
With mitten hands, and caps drawn low,
To guard our necks and ears from snow,
We cut the solid whiteness through.
And, where the drift was deepest, made
A tunnel walled and overlaid
With dazzling crystal : we had read
Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,
And to our own his name we gave,
With many a wish the luck were ours
To test his lamp's supernal powers.

We reached the barn with merry din,
And roused the prisoned brutes within.
The old horse thrust his long head out,
And grave with wonder gazed about;
The cock his lusty greeting said,
And forth his speckled harem led;
The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,
And mild reproach of hunger looked;
The hornèd patriarch of the sheep,
Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,
Shook his sage head with gesture mute,
And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore
The loosening drift its breath before;
Low circling round its southern zone,
The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.
No church-bell lent its Christian tone
To the savage air, no social smoke
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.
A solitude made more intense
By dreary-voicèd elements,
The shrieking of the mindless wind,
The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,
And on the glass the unmeaning beat
Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.
Beyond the circle of our hearth
No welcome sound of toil or mirth
Unbound the spell, and testified
Of human life and thought outside.
We minded that the sharpest ear
The buried brooklet could not hear,
The music of whose liquid lip
Had been to us companionship,
And, in our lonely life, had grown
To have an almost human tone.

As night drew on, and, from the crest
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,
The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank
From sight beneath the smothering bank,
We piled, with care, our nightly stack
Of wood against the chimney-back,—
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
And on its top the stout back-stick;
The knotty forestick laid apart,

And filled between with curious art
 The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
 We watched the first red blaze appear,
 Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
 On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
 Until the old, rude-furnished room
 Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;
 While radiant with a mimic flame
 Outside the sparkling drift became,
 And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree
 Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.
 The crane and pendent trammels showed,
 The turks' heads on the andirons glowed;
 While childish fancy, prompt to tell
 The meaning of the miracle,
 Whispered the old rhyme: '*Under the tree,*
When fire outdoors burns merrily,
There the witches are making tea.'

The moon above the eastern wood
 Shone at its full; the hill-range stood
 Transfigured in the silver flood,
 Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,
 Dead white, save where some sharp ravine
 Took shadow, or the sombre green
 Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black
 Against the whiteness at their back.
 For such a world and such a night
 Most fitting that unwarming light,
 Which only seemed where'er it fell
 To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without,
 We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
 Content to let the north-wind roar
 In baffled rage at pane and door,
 While the red logs before us beat
 The frost-line back with tropic heat;
 And ever, when a louder blast
 Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
 The merrier up its roaring draught
 The great throat of the chimney laughed;
 The house-dog on his paws outspread
 Laid to the fire his drowsy head,
 The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
 A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;

And, for the winter fireside meet,
Between the andirons' straddling feet,
The mug of cider simmered slow,
The apples sputtered in a row,
And, close at hand, the basket stood
With nuts from brown October's wood.

What matter how the night behaved?
What matter how the north-wind raved?
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
O Time and Change! — with hair as gray
As was my sire's that winter day,
How strange it seems, with so much gone
Of life and love, to still live on!
Ah, brother! only I and thou
Are left of all that circle now, —
The dear home faces whereupon
That fitful firelight paled and shone.
Henceforward, listen as we will,
The voices of that hearth are still;
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er
Those lighted faces smile no more.
We tread the paths their feet have worn,
 We sit beneath their orchard trees,
 We hear, like them, the hum of bees
And rustle of the bladed corn;
We turn the pages that they read,
 Their written words we linger o'er,
But in the sun they cast no shade,
No voice is heard, no sign is made,
 No step is on the conscious floor!
Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust
(Since He who knows our need is just)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
 The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
 And Love can never lose its own!
We sped the time with stories old,
Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,

Or stammered from our school-book lore
 'The Chief of Gambia's golden shore.'
 How often since, when all the land
 Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,
 As if a far-blown trumpet stirred
 The languorous sin-sick air, I heard :
*'Does not the voice of reason cry,
 Claim the first right which Nature gave,
 From the red scourge of bondage fly,
 Nor deign to live a burdened slave!'*

Our father rode again his ride
 On Memphremagog's wooded side ;
 Sat down again to moose and samp
 In trapper's hut and Indian camp ;
 Lived o'er the old idyllic ease
 Beneath St. François' hemlock-trees ;
 Again for him the moonlight shone
 On Norman cap and bodiced zone ;
 Again he heard the violin play
 Which led the village dance away.
 And mingled in its merry whirl
 The grandam and the laughing girl.
 Or, nearer home, our steps he led
 Where Salisbury's level marshes spread
 Mile-wide as flies the laden bee ;
 Where merry mowers, hale and strong,
 Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths along
 The low green prairies of the sea.
 We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,
 And round the rocky Isles of Shoals
 The hake-broil on the drift-wood coals ;
 The chowder on the sand-beach made,
 Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot
 With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.
 We heard the tales of witchcraft old,
 And dream and sign and marvel told
 To sleepy listeners as they lay
 Stretched idly on the salted hay,
 Adrift along the winding shores,
 When favoring breezes deigned to blow
 The square sail of the gundelow
 And idle lay the useless oars.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel
 Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,

Told how the Indian hordes came down
At midnight on Cocheco town,
And how her own great-uncle bore
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,
So rich and picturesque and free
(The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways),
The story of her early days,—
She made us welcome to her home;
Old hearths grew wide to give us room;
We stole with her a frightened look
At the gray wizard's conjuring-book,
The fame whereof went far and wide
Through all the simple country-side;
We heard the hawks at twilight play,
The boat-horn on Piscataqua,
The loon's weird laughter far away;
We fished her little trout-brook, knew
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,
What sunny hillsides autumn-brown
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,
Saw where in sheltered cove and bay
The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,
And heard the wild-geese calling loud
Beneath the gray November cloud.

Then, haply, with a look more grave,
And soberer tone, some tale she gave
From painful Sewel's ancient tome,
Beloved in every Quaker home,
Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,
Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint,—
Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint!—
Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,
And water-butt and bread-cask failed,
And cruel, hungry eyes pursued
His portly presence mad for food,
With dark hints muttered under breath
Of casting lots for life or death,
Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,
To be himself the sacrifice.
Then, suddenly, as if to save
The good man from his living grave,
A ripple on the water grew,
A school of porpoise flashed in view.

'Take, eat,' he said, 'and be content;
These fishes in my stead are sent
By Him who gave the tangled ram
To spare the child of Abraham.'

Our uncle, innocent of books,
Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,
The ancient teachers never dumb
Of Nature's unhoused lyceum.
In moons and tides and weather wise,
He read the clouds and prophecies,
And foul or fair could well divine,
By many an occult hint and sign,
Holding the cunning-warded keys
To all the woodcraft mysteries ;
Himself to Nature's heart so near
That all her voices in his ear
Of beast or bird had meanings clear,
Like Apollonius of old,
Who knew the tales the sparrows told,
Or Hermes, who interpreted
What the sage cranes of Nilus said ;
A simple, guileless, childlike man,
Content to live where life began ;
Strong only on his native grounds,
The little world of sights and sounds
Whose girdle was the parish bounds,
Whereof his fondly partial pride
The common features magnified,
As Surrey hills to mountains grew
In White of Selborne's loving view, —
He told how teal and loon he shot,
And how the eagle's eggs he got,
The feats on pond and river done,
The prodigies of rod and gun ;
Till, warming with the tales he told,
Forgotten was the outside cold,
The bitter wind unheeded blew,
From ripening corn the pigeons flew,
The partridge drummed i' the wood, the mink
Went fishing down the river-brink ;
In fields with bean or clover gay,
The woodchuck, like a hermit gray,
Peered from the doorway of his cell ;
The muskrat plied the mason's trade,
And tier by tier his mud-walls laid ;

And from the shagbark overhead
The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of cheer
And voice in dreams I see and hear —
The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate,
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less
Found peace in love's unselfishness,
And welcome whereso'er she went,
A calm and gracious element,
Whose presence seemed the sweet income
And womanly atmosphere of home —
Called up her girlhood memories,
The huskings and the apple-bees,
The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,
Weaving through all the poor details
And homespun warp of circumstance
A golden woof-thread of romance.
For well she kept her genial mood
And simple faith of maidenhood
Before her still a cloud-land lay,
The mirage loomed across her way ;
The morning dew, that dries so soon
With others, glistened at her noon ;
Through years of toil and soil and care,
From glossy tress to thin gray hair,
All unprofaned she held apart
The virgin fancies of the heart.
Be shame to him of woman born
Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister plied
Her evening task the stand beside ;
A full, rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful and almost sternly just,
Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,
And make her generous thought a fact,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self-sacrifice.
O heart sore-tried ! thou hast the best,
That Heaven itself could give thee, — rest,
Rest from all bitter thoughts and things !
How many a poor one's blessing went
With thee beneath the low green tent
Whose curtain never outward swings !

As one who held herself a part
Of all she saw, and let her heart
 Against the household bosom lean,
Upon the motley-braided mat
Our youngest and our dearest sat,
Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,
 Now bathed in the unfading green
And holy peace of Paradise.

Oh, looking from some heavenly hill,
 Or from the shade of saintly palms,
 Or silver reach of river calms,
Do those large eyes behold me still?
With me one little year ago:—
The chill weight of the winter snow
 For months upon her grave has lain;
And now, when summer south-winds blow
 And brier and harebell bloom again,
I tread the pleasant paths we trod,
I see the violet-sprinkled sod
Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak
The hillside flowers she loved to seek,
Yet following me where'er I went
With dark eyes full of love's content.
The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills
The air with sweetness; all the hills
Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;
But still I wait with ear and eye
For something gone which should be nigh,
A loss in all familiar things,
In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.
And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,
 Am I not richer than of old?
Safe in thy immortality,
 What change can reach the wealth I hold?
 What chance can mar the pearl and gold
Thy love hath left in trust with me?
And while in life's late afternoon,
 Where cool and long the shadows grow,
I walk to meet the night that soon
 Shall shape and shadow overflow,
I cannot feel that thou art far,
Since near at need the angels are;
And when the sunset gates unbar,
 Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
And, white against the evening star,
 The welcome of thy beckoning hand?

Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,
The master of the district school
Held at the fire his favored place,
Its warm glow lit a laughing face
Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared
The uncertain prophecy of beard.
He teased the mitten-blinded cat,
Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,
Sang songs, and told us what befalls
In classic Dartmouth's college halls.
Born the wild Northern hills among,
From whence his yeoman father wrung
By patient toil subsistence scant,
Not competence and yet not want,
He early gained the power to pay
His cheerful, self-reliant way;
Could doff at ease his scholar's gown
To peddle wares from town to town;
Or through the long vacation's reach
In lonely lowland districts teach,
Where all the droll experience found
At stranger hearths in boarding round,
The moonlit skater's keen delight,
The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,
The rustic-party, with its rough
Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,
And whirling-plate, and forfeits paid,
His winter task a pastime made.
Happy the snow-locked homes wherein
He tuned his merry violin,
Or played the athlete in the barn,
Or held the good dame's winding-yarn,
Or mirth-provoking versions told
Of classic legends rare and old,
Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome
Had all the commonplace of home,
And little seemed at best the odds
'Twixt Yankee pedlers and old gods;
Where Pindus-born Arachthus took
The guise of any grist-mill brook,
And dread Olympus at his will
Became a huckleberry hill.

A careless boy that night he seemed;
But at his desk he had the look

And air of one who wisely schemed,
And hostage from the future took
In trainèd thought and lore of book.
Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he
Shall Freedom's young apostles be,
Who, following in War's bloody trail,
Shall every lingering wrong assail ;
All chains from limb and spirit strike,
Uplift the black and white alike ;
Scatter before their swift advance
The darkness and the ignorance,
The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,
Which nurtured Treason's monstrous growth,
Made murder pastime, and the hell
Of prison-torture possible ;
The cruel lie of caste refute,
Old forms remould, and substitute
For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,
For blind routine, wise-handed skill ;
A school-house plant on every hill,
Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence
The quick wires of intelligence ;
Till North and South together brought
Shall own the same electric thought,
In peace a common flag salute,
And, side by side in labor's free
And unresentful rivalry,
Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

Another guest that winter night
Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.
Unmarked by time, and yet not young,
The honeyed music of her tongue
And words of meekness scarcely told
A nature passionate and bold,
Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,
Its milder features dwarfed beside
Her unbent will's majestic pride.
She sat among us, at the best,
A not unfear'd, half-welcome guest,
Rebuking with her cultured phrase
Our homeliness of words and ways.
A certain pard-like, treacherous grace
Swayed the lithe limbs and dropped the lash,
Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash ;
And under low brows, black with night,

Rayed out at times a dangerous light;
The sharp heat-lightnings of her face
Presaging ill to him whom Fate
Condemned to share her love or hate.
A woman tropical, intense
In thought and act, in soul and sense,
She blended in a like degree
The vixen and the devotee,
Revealing with each freak or feint
 The temper of Petruchio's Kate,
The raptures of Siena's saint.
Her tapering hand and rounded wrist
Had facile power to form a fist;
The warm, dark languish of her eyes
Was never safe from wrath's surprise.
Brows saintly calm and lips devout
Knew every change of scowl and pout;
And the sweet voice had notes more high
And shrill for social battle-cry.

Since then what old cathedral town
Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,
What convent-gate has held its lock
Against the challenge of her knock!
Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thoroughfares,
Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs,
Gray olive slopes of hills that hem
 Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,
Or startling on her desert throne
The crazy Queen of Lebanon
With claims fantastic as her own,
Her tireless feet have held their way;
And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,
She watches under Eastern skies,
 With hope each day renewed and fresh,
 The Lord's quick coming in the flesh,
Whereof she dreams and prophesies!

Where'er her troubled path may be,
 The Lord's sweet pity with her go!
The outward wayward life we see,
 The hidden springs we may not know.
Nor is it given us to discern
 What threads the fatal sisters spun,
 Through what ancestral years has run
The sorrow with the woman born,

What forged her cruel chain of moods,
What set her feet in solitudes,

And held the love within her mute,
What mingled madness in the blood,

A life-long discord and annoy,

Water of tears with oil of joy,

And hid within the folded bud

Peversities of flower and fruit.

It is not ours to separate

The tangled skein of will and fate,
To show what metes and bounds should stand

Upon the soul's debatable land,

And between choice and Providence

Divide the circle of events;

But He who knows our frame is just,

Merciful and compassionate,

And full of sweet assurances

And hope for all the language is,

That He remembereth we are dust!

At last the great logs, crumbling low,
Sent out a dull and dullest glow,

The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,

Ticking its weary circuit through,

Pointed with mutely warning sign

Its black hand to the hour of nine.

That sign the pleasant circle broke:

My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,

Knocked from its bowl the refuse gray,

And laid it tenderly away;

Then roused himself to safely cover

The dull red brands with ashes over.

And while, with care, our mother laid

The work aside, her steps she stayed

One moment, seeking to express

Her grateful sense of happiness

For food and shelter, warmth and health,

And love's contentment more than wealth,

With simple wishes (not the weak,

Vain prayers which no fulfilment seek,

But such as warm the generous heart,

O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)

That none might lack, that bitter night,

For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard

The wind that round the gables roared,

With now and then a ruder shock,
Which made our very bedsteads rock.
We heard the loosened clapboards tost,
The board-nails snapping in the frost ;
And on us, through the unplastered wall,
Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall.
But sleep stole on, as sleep will do
When hearts are light and life is new ;
Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,
Till in the summer-land of dreams
They softened to the sound of streams,
Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,
And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout
Of merry voices high and clear ;
And saw the teamsters drawing near
To break the drifted highways out.
Down the long hillside treading slow
We saw the half-buried oxen go,
Shaking the snow from heads uptost,
Their straining nostrils white with frost.
Before our door the straggling train
Drew up, an added team to gain.
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,
Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes
From lip to lip ; the younger folks
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling, rolled,
Then toiled again the cavalcade
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,
And woodland paths that wound between
Low drooping pine-boughs winter-weighed.
From every barn a team afoot,
At every house a new recruit,
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law,
Haply the watchful young men saw
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls
And curious eyes of merry girls,
Lifting their hands in mock defer'ree
Against the snow-ball's compliments,
And reading in each missive tost
The charm with Eden never lost.

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound ;
And, following where the teamsters led,
The wise old Doctor went his round,

Just pausing at our door to say,
 In the brief autocratic way
 Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,
 Was free to urge her claim on all,
 That some poor neighbor sick abed
 At night our mother's aid would need.
 For, one in generous thought and deed,
 What mattered in the sufferer's sight
 The Quaker matron's inward light,
 The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed?
 All hearts confess the saints elect
 Who, twain in faith, in love agree,
 And melt not in an acid sect
 The Christian pearl of charity!

So days went on: a week had passed
 Since the great world was heard from last.
 The Almanac we studied o'er,
 Read and reread our little store
 Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score;
 One harmless novel, mostly hid
 From younger eyes, a book forbid,
 And poetry (or good or bad,
 A single book was all we had),
 Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,
 A stranger to the heathen Nine,
 Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine,
 The wars of David and the Jews.

At last the floundering carrier bore
 The village paper to our door.
 Lo! broadening outward as we read,
 To warmer zones the horizon spread;
 In panoramic length unrolled
 We saw the marvels that it told.
 Before us passed the painted Greeks,
 And daft McGregor on his raids
 In Costa Rica's everglades.
 And up Taygetos winding slow
 Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,
 A Turk's head at each saddle-bow!
 Welcome to us its week-old news,
 Its corner for the rustic Muse,
 Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,
 Its record, mingling in a breath
 The wedding bell and dirge of death:

Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,
The latest culprit sent to jail ;
Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,
Its venue sales and goods at cost,
And traffic calling loud for gain.
We felt the stir of hall and street,
The pulse of life that round us beat ;
The chill embargo of the snow
Was melted in the genial glow ;
Wide swung again our ice-locked door,
And all the world was ours once more !

Clasp, Angel of the backward look
And folded wings of ashen gray
And voice of echoes far away,
The brazen covers of thy book ;
The weird palimpsest old and vast,
Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past ;
Where, closely mingling, pale and glow
The characters of joy and woe ;
The monographs of outlived years,
Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,
Green hills of life that slope to death,
And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees
Shade off to mournful cypresses
With the white amaranths underneath.
Even while I look, I can but heed
The restless sands' incessant fall,
Importunate hours that hours succeed,
Each clamorous with its own sharp need,
And duty keeping pace with all.
Shut down and clasp the heavy lids ;
I hear again the voice that bids
The dreamer leave his dream midway
For larger hopes and graver fears ;
Life greatens in these later years,
The century's aloe flowers to-day !

Yet, haply, in some lull of life,
Some Truce of God which breaks its strife,
The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,
Dreaming in throngful city ways
Of winter joys his boyhood knew ;
And dear and early friends — the few
Who yet remain — shall pause to view
These Flemish pictures of old days ;

Sit with me by the homestead hearth,
 And stretch the hands of memory forth
 To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze !
 And thanks untraced to lips unknown
 Shall greet me like the odors blown
 From unseen meadows newly mown,
 Or lilies floating in some pond,
 Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond ;
 The traveller owns the grateful sense
 Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,
 And, pausing, takes with forehead bare
 The benediction of the air.

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT

In the old days (a custom laid aside
 With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent
 Their wisest men to make the public laws.
 And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound
 Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas,
 Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,
 And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,
 Stamford sent up to the councils of the State
 Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'T was on a May-day of the far old year
 Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
 Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,
 Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
 A horror of great darkness, like the night
 In day of which the Norland sagas tell, —
 The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky
 Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim
 Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs
 The crater's sides from the red hell below.
 Birds ceased to sing, and all the barn-yard fowls
 Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
 Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leather wings
 Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
 Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp
 To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
 The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
 Might look from the rent clouds, not as He looked
 A loving guest at Bethany, but stern
 As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as ghosts,
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.
'It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,'
Some said; and then, as if with one accord,
All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice
The intolerable hush. 'This well may be
The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;
But be it so or not, I only know
My present duty, and my Lord's command
To occupy till He come. So at the post
Where He hath set me in his providence,
I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face,—
No faithless servant frightened from my task,
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,
Let God do his work, we will see to ours.
Bring in the candles.' And they brought them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,
An act to amend an act to regulate
The shad and alewife fisheries. Whereupon
Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport,
Straight to the question, with no figures of speech
Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without
The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:
His awe-struck colleagues listening all the while,
Between the pauses of his argument,
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this day,
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen
Against the background of unnatural dark,
A witness to the ages as they pass,
That simple duty hath no place for fear.

THE SISTERS

Annie and Rhoda, sisters twain,
Woke in the night to the sound of rain,

The rush of wind, the ramp and roar
Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed-gown white,
And looked out into the storm and night.

‘Hush, and hearken !’ she cried in fear,
‘Hearest thou nothing, sister dear?’

‘I hear the sea, and theplash of rain,
And roar of the northeast hurricane.

‘Get thee back to the bed so warm,
No good comes of watching a storm.

‘What is it to thee, I fain would know,
That waves are roaring and wild winds blow ?

‘No lover of thine ’s afloat to miss
The harbor-lights on a night like this.’

‘But I heard a voice cry out my name,
Up from the sea on the wind it came !

‘Twice and thrice have I heard it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall !’

On her pillow the sister tossed her head.
‘Hall of the Heron is safe,’ she said.

‘In the tautest schooner that ever swam
He rides at anchor in Annisquam.

‘And, if in peril from swamping sea
Or lee shore rocks, would he call on thee?’

But the girl heard only the wind and tide,
And wringing her small white hands she cried :

‘O sister Rhoda, there ’s something wrong ;
I hear it again, so loud and long.

‘ “Annie ! Annie !” I hear it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall !’

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame,
‘Thou liest ! He never would call thy name !

‘If he did, I would pray the wind and sea
To keep him forever from thee and me !’

Then out of the sea blew a dreadful blast ;
Like the cry of a dying man it passed.

The young girl hushed on her lips a groan,
But through her tears a strange light shone,—

The solemn joy of her heart's release
To own and cherish its love in peace.

'Dearest!' she whispered, under breath,
'Life was a lie, but true is death.'

'The love I hid from myself away
Shall crown me now in the light of day.'

'My ears shall never to wooer list,
Never by lover my lips be kissed.'

'Sacred to thee am I henceforth,
Thou in heaven and I on earth!'

She came and stood by her sister's bed :
'Hall of the Heron is dead !' she said.

'The wind and the waves their work have done,
We shall see him no more beneath the sun.'

'Little will reck that heart of thine ;
It loved him not with a love like mine.'

'I, for his sake, were he but here,
Could hem and 'broider thy bridal gear,

'Though hands should tremble and eyes be wet,
And stitch for stitch in my heart be set.'

'But now my soul with his soul I wed ;
Thine the living, and mine the dead !'

Thomas Holley Chivers [1809-1858]

SONG

On thy waters, thy sweet valley waters,
Oh ! Georgia ! how happy were we !
When thy daughters, thy sweet-smiling daughters,
Once gathered sweet-william for me.
Oh ! thy wildwood, thy dark shady wildwood
Had many bright visions for me ;
For my childhood, my bright rosy childhood
Was cradled, dear Georgia ! in thee.

On thy mountains, thy green purple mountains,
 The seasons are waiting on thee ;
 And thy fountains, thy clear crystal fountains
 Are making sweet music for me.
 Oh ! thy waters, thy sweet valley waters
 Are dearer than any to me ;
 For thy daughters, thy sweet-smiling daughters,
 Oh ! Georgia ! give beauty to thee.

FAITH

Faith is the flower that blooms unseen
 By mountains of immortal green —
 A hoped-for harvest in the skies,
 In which the reaper never dies —
 A tree to which the power is given
 To lift its branches into heaven ;
 And from whose boughs of gorgeous fruit
 A loftier tree shall take its root.

Lord ! we are grafted into thine,
 When broken off from Adam's vine ;
 And so, from that degenerate tree,
 We grow into the life of thee !
 For, by the prunings of thy word,
 Are we then purged into the Lord ;
 And like Mount Zion we shall stand
 The Temples of our native land.

Lord ! if the stars should take their flight,
 And vanish from the halls of night ,
 And if the morning should appear,
 And vanish from the evening near ;
 And if the rivers should run dry ,
 And every flower that decks them die ;
 And if the world should cease to be —
 I would not lose my trust in thee.

SONG TO ISA SINGING

Upon thy lips now lies
 The music-dew of love ;
 And in thy deep blue eyes,
 More mild than Heaven above —
 The meekness of the dove.

More sweet than the perfume
 Of snow-white jessamine

When it is first in bloom,
 Is that sweet breath of thine,
 Which mingles now with mine.

Like an *Æolian* sound
 Out of an ocean shell,
 Which fills the air around
 With music such as fell
 From lips of Israfel;

Over thy lips now flow
 Out of thy heart, for me,
 A song which none can know
 But him who hopes to be
 Forever more with thee.

And like the snow-white Dove
 Frightened from earth at even —
 On tempests borne above —
 My swift-winged soul is driven
 Upon thy song to heaven !

THE VOICE OF THOUGHT

Faint as the far-down tone
 Beneath the sounding sea,
 Muffled by its own moan,
 To silent melody ;
 So faint we cannot tell
 But that the sound we hear
 Is some sweet roses' smell
 That falls upon our ear ;
 (As if the Butterfly,
 Shaking the Lily-bell,
 While drinking joyfully,
 Should toll its own death-knell !)
 Sweeter than Hope's sweet lute
 Singing of joys to be,
 When Pain's harsh voice is mute,
 Is the Soul's sweet song to me.

AVALON

Death's pale cold orb has turned to an eclipse
 My Son of Love !
 The worms are feeding on thy lily-lips,
 My milk-white Dove !

Pale purple tinges thy soft finger-tips !
 While nectar thy pure soul in glory sips,
 As Death's cold frost mine own forever nips !

Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Wake up, oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !
 And come from Death !
 Heave off the clod that lies so heavy on
 Thy breast beneath
 In that cold grave, my more than Precious One !
 And come to me ! for I am here alone —
 With none to comfort me ! — my hopes are gone
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Forever more must I, on this damp sod,
 Renew and keep
 My Covenant of Sorrows with my God,
 And weep, weep, weep !
 Writhing in pain beneath Death's iron rod !
 Till I shall go to that Divine Abode —
 Treading the path that thy dear feet have trod —
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Oh ! precious Saviour ! gracious heavenly Lord !
 Refresh my soul !
 Here, with the healings of thy heavenly Word,
 Make my heart whole !
 My little Lambs are scattered now abroad
 In Death's dark Valley, where they bleat unheard !
 Dear Shepherd ! give their Shepherd his reward
 Where they are lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 With Avalon ! my son ! my son !

For thou didst tread with fire-ensandaled feet,
 Star-crowned, forgiven,

The burning diapason of the stars so sweet,
To God in Heaven !

And, walking on the sapphire-paven street,
Didst take upon the highest Sill thy seat —
Waiting in glory there my soul to meet,
When I am lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Thou wert my Micro-Uranos below —
My Little Heaven !
My Micro-Cosmos in this world of wo,
From morn till even !
A living Lyre of God who charmed me so
With thy sweet songs, that I did seem to go
Out of this world where thou art shining now,
But without lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Thou wert my son of Melody alway,
Oh ! Child Divine !
Whose golden radiance filled the world with Day !
For thou didst shine
A lustrous Diadem of Song for aye,
Whose Divertisements, through Heaven's Holyday,
Now ravish Angel's ears — as well they may —
While I am crying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Thy soul did soar up to the Gates of God,
Oh ! Lark-like Child !
And through Heaven's Bowers of Bliss, by Angels trod,
Poured Wood-notes wild !
In emulation of that Bird, which stood,
In solemn silence, listening to thy flood
Of golden Melody deluge the wood
Where thou art lying
Beside the beautiful undying
In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Throughout the Spring-time of Eternity,
 Oh ! Avalon !
 Paeans of thy selectest melody
 Pour forth, dear Son !
 Clapping thy snow-white hands incessantly,
 Amid Heaven's Bowers of Bliss in ecstasy —
 The odor of thy song inviting me
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

The redolent quintessence of thy tongue,
 Oh ! Avalon !
 Embowered by Angels Heaven's sweet Bowers among
 Many in one —
 Is gathered from the choicest of the throng,
 In an Æonian Hymn forever young,
 Thou Philomelian Eclecticist of Song !
 While I am sighing
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 For Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Thou wert like Taleisin, "full of eyes,"
 Bardling of Love !
 My beautiful Divine Eumenides !
 My gentle Dove !
 Thou silver Swan of Golden Elegies !
 Whose Mendelssohnian Songs now fill the skies !
 While I am weeping where my Lily lies !
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Kindling the high-uplifted stars at even
 With thy sweet song,
 The Angels, on the Sapphire Sills of Heaven,
 In Rapturous throng,
 Melted to milder meekness, with the Seven
 Bright Lamps of God to glory given,
 Leant down to hear thy voice roll up the leaven,
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh ! Avalon ! my son ! my son !

Can any thing that Christ has ever said,
 Make my heart whole?
 Can less than bringing back the early dead,
 Restore my soul?
 No! this alone can make my Heavenly bread —
 Christ's Bread of Life brought down from Heaven, instead
 Of this sad Song, on which my soul has fed,
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh! Avalon! my son! my son!

Have I not need to weep from Morn till Even,
 Far bitterer tears
 Than cruel Earth, the unforgiven,
 Through his long years —
 Inquisitorial Hell, or strictest Heaven,
 Wrung from Christ's bleeding heart when riven?
 Thus from one grief unto another driven,
 Where thou art lying
 Beside the beautiful undying
 In the Valley of the pausing of the Moon,
 Oh! Avalon! my son! my son!

THE CHAPLET OF CYPRESS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF MY SISTER

Up through the hyaline ether-sea,
 Star-diademed, in chariot of pure pain,
 Through th' empyreal star-fires radiantly,
 Triumphant over Death in Heaven to reign
 Thy soul is gone, seeking its Blest Abode,
 Where break the songs of stars against the feet of God.

At Heaven's high portals thou dost stand,
 Bands of attendant Angels by thy side —
 Gazing with rapture on the Promised Land —
 Pale — meek — with thy last sickness, purified,
 By suffering, from the sins of earth, to be
 A white-robed Angel round God's throne eternally.

Like stars at midnight in the sky,
 Were all the dark things in this world to thee;
 The joys of earth, when thou wert called to die,
 Were ringing in thine ears most audibly,
 When Angel-voices from the far-off skies,
 Poured on thy soul rivers of rapturous melodies . . .

APOLLO

What are stars but hieroglyphics of God's glory writ in lightning
 On the wide-unfolded pages of the azure scroll above?
 But the quenchless apotheoses of thoughts forever brightening
 In the mighty Mind immortal of the God whose name is Love?
 Diamond letters sculptured, rising, on the azure ether pages,
 That now sing to one another, unto one another shine —
 God's eternal Scripture talking, through the midnight, to the Ages,
 Of the life that is immortal, of the life that is divine —
 Life that *cannot* be immortal, but the life that is divine.

Like some deep, impetuous river from the fountains everlasting,
 Down the serpentine soft valley of the vistas of all Time,
 Over cataracts of adamant uplifted into mountains,
 Soared his soul to God in thunder on the wings of thought sublime.
 With the rising golden glory of the sun in ministrations,
 Making oceans metropolitan of splendor for the dawn —
 Piling pyramid on pyramid of music for the nations —
 Sings the Angel who sits shining everlasting in the sun,
 For the stars which are the echoes of the shining of the sun.

Like the lightnings piled on lightnings, ever rising, never reaching,
 In one monument of glory toward the golden gates of God —
 Voicing out themselves in thunder upon thunder in their preaching,
 Piled this Cyclops up his Epic where the Angels never trod.
 Like the fountains everlasting that for evermore are flowing
 From the throne within the center of the City built on high,
 With their genial irrigation life for evermore bestowing —
 Flows his lucid, liquid river through the gardens of the sky,
 For the stars forever blooming in the gardens of the sky.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

Though he lay on the ground,
 Yet, in visions of night,
 He was compassed all round
 By the angels of light.

Where the Cherubim rode
 On four lions of gold,
 There this cherub abode
 Making new what was old.

Where the angels came down
 To the shepherds at night,
 Near to Bethlehem Town,
 Clad in garments of light —

There the Little Boy Blue
 Blew aloud on his horn
 Songs as soft as the dew
 From the Mountains of Morn. . . .

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

OLD IRONSIDES

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down !
 Long has it waved on high,
 And many an eye has danced to see
 That banner in the sky ;
 Beneath it rung the battle shout,
 And burst the cannon's roar ; —
 The meteor of the ocean air
 Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
 Where knelt the vanquished foe,
 When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
 And waves were white below,
 No more shall feel the victor's tread,
 Or know the conquered knee ; —
 The harpies of the shore shall pluck
 The eagle of the sea !

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
 Should sink beneath the wave ;
 Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
 And there should be her grave ;
 Nail to the mast her holy flag,
 Set every threadbare sail,
 And give her to the god of storms,
 The lightning and the gale !

THE BALLAD OF THE OYSTERMAN

It was a tall young oysterman lived by the river-side,
 His shop was just upon the bank, his boat was on the tide ;
 The daughter of a fisherman, that was so straight and slim,
 Lived over on the other bank, right opposite to him.

It was the pensive oysterman that saw a lovely maid,
 Upon a moonlight evening, a-sitting in the shade ;
 He saw her wave her handkerchief, as much as if to say,
 'I'm wide awake, young oysterman, and all the folks away.'

Then up arose the oysterman, and to himself said he,
 'I guess I 'll leave the skiff at home, for fear that folks should see ;
 I read it in the story-book, that, for to kiss his dear,
 Leander swam the Hellespont, — and I will swim this here.'

And he has leaped into the waves, and crossed the shining stream,
 And he has clambered up the bank, all in the moonlight gleam ;
 Oh there were kisses sweet as dew, and words as soft as rain, —
 But they have heard her father's step, and in he leaps again !

Out spoke the ancient fisherman, — 'Oh, what was that, my daughter ?'

'T was nothing but a pebble, sir, I threw into the water.'
 'And what is that, pray tell me, love, that paddles off so fast ?'
 'It 's nothing but a porpoise, sir, that 's been a-swimming past.'

Out spoke the ancient fisherman, — 'Now bring me my harpoon !
 I 'll get into my fishing-boat, and fix the fellow soon.'
 Down fell that pretty innocent, as falls a snow-white lamb,
 Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks, like seaweed on a clam.

Alas for those two loving ones ! she waked not from her swound,
 And he was taken with the cramp, and in the waves was drowned ;
 But Fate has metamorphosed them, in pity of their woe,
 And now they keep an oyster-shop for mermaids down below.

THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS

I wrote some lines once on a time
 In wondrous merry mood,
 And thought, as usual, men would say
 They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
 I laughed as I would die ;
 Albeit, in the general way,
 A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came ;
 How kind it was of him
 To mind a slender man like me,
 He of the mighty limb !

'These to the printer,' I exclaimed,
 And, in my humorous way,
 I added (as a trifling jest),
 'There 'll be the devil to pay.'

He took the paper, and I watched,
 And saw him peep within;
 At the first line he read, his face
 Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad,
 And shot from ear to ear;
 He read the third; a chuckling noise
 I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
 The fifth; his waistband split;
 The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
 And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
 I watched that wretched man,
 And since, I never dare to write
 As funny as I can.

MY AUNT

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
 Long years have o'er her flown;
 Yet still she strains the aching clasp
 That binds her virgin zone;
 I know it hurts her, — though she looks
 As cheerful as she can;
 Her waist is ampler than her life,
 For life is but a span.

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!
 Her hair is almost gray;
 Why will she train that winter curl
 In such a spring-like way?
 How can she lay her glasses down,
 And say she reads as well,
 When through a double convex lens
 She just makes out to spell?

Her father — grandpapa! forgive
 This erring lip its smiles —
 Vowed she should make the finest girl
 Within a hundred miles;
 He sent her to a stylish school;
 'T was in her thirteenth June;
 And with her, as the rules required,
 'Two towels and a spoon.'

They braced my aunt against a board,
 To make her straight and tall;
 They laced her up, they starved her down,
 To make her light and small;
 They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
 They screwed it up with pins;—
 Oh, never mortal suffered more
 In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,
 My grandsire brought her back
 (By daylight, lest some rabid youth
 Might follow on the track);
 ‘Ah !’ said my grandsire, as he shook
 Some powder in his pan,
 ‘What could this lovely creature do
 Against a desperate man !’

Alas ! nor chariot, nor barouche,
 Nor bandit cavalcade,
 Tore from the trembling father’s arms
 His all-accomplished maid.
 For her how happy had it been !
 And Heaven had spared to me
 To see one sad, ungathered rose
 On my ancestral tree.

THE LAST LEAF

I saw him once before,
 As he passed by the door,
 And again
 The pavement stones resound,
 As he totters o’er the ground
 With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
 Ere the pruning-knife of Time
 Cut him down,
 Not a better man was found
 By the Crier on his round
 Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
 And he looks at all he meets
 Sad and wan,

And he shakes his feeble head,
 That it seems as if he said,
 ‘They are gone.’

The mossy marbles rest
 On the lips that he has prest
 In their bloom,
 And the names he loved to hear
 Have been carved for many a year
 On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
 Poor old lady, she is dead
 Long ago —
 That he had a Roman nose,
 And his cheek was like a rose
 In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,
 And it rests upon his chin
 Like a staff,
 And a crook is in his back,
 And a melancholy crack
 In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
 For me to sit and grin
 At him here;
 But the old three-cornered hat,
 And the breeches, and all that,
 Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
 The last leaf upon the tree
 In the spring,
 Let them smile, as I do now,
 At the old forsaken bough
 Where I cling.

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

OR, THE WONDERFUL ‘ONE-HOSS SHAY’

A LOGICAL STORY

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
 That was built in such a logical way
 It ran a hundred years to a day,
 And then, of a sudden, it — ah, but stay,

I 'll tell you what happened without delay,
 Scaring the parson into fits,
 Frightening people out of their wits,—
 Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
 Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
 That was the year when Lisbon-town
 Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
 And Braddock's army was done so brown,
 Left without a scalp to its crown.
 It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
 That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
 There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
 In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
 In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
 In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking still,
 Find it somewhere you must and will,—
 Above or below, or within or without,—
 And that 's the reason, beyond a doubt,
 That a chaise *breaks down*, but does n't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as deacons do,
 With an 'I dew vum,' or an 'I tell *yeou*')
 He would build one shay to beat the taown
 'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
 It should be so built that it *could n'* break daown:
 'Fur,' said the Deacon, 't 's mighty plain
 Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
 'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
 Is only jest
 T' make that place uz strong uz the rest.'

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
 Where he could find the strongest oak,
 That could n't be split nor bent nor broke,—
 That was for spokes and floor and sills;
 He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
 The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
 The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
 But lasts like iron for things like these;
 The hubs of logs from the 'Settler's ellum,'—
 Last of its timber, — they could n't sell 'em,

Never an axe had seen their chips,
 And the wedges flew from between their lips,
 Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
 Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
 Spring, tire, axle, and lynchpin too,
 Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
 Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
 Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
 Found in the pit when the tanner died.
 That was the way he 'put her through.'
 'There!' said the Deacon, 'naow she 'll dew !'

Do ! I tell you, I rather guess
 She was a wonder, and nothing less !
 Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
 Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
 Children and grandchildren — where were they ?
 But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
 As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day !

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED ; — it came and found
 The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
 Eighteen hundred increased by ten ; —
 'Hahnsum kerridge' they called it then.
 Eighteen hundred and twenty came : —
 Running as usual ; much the same.
 Thirty and forty at last arrive,
 And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
 Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
 Without both feeling and looking queer.
 In fact, there 's nothing that keeps its youth,
 So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
 (This is a moral that runs at large ;
 Take it. — You 're welcome. — No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the earthquake-day, —
 There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
 A general flavor of mild decay,
 But nothing local, as one may say.
 There could n't be, — for the Deacon's art
 Had made it so like in every part
 That there was n't a chance for one to start.
 For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
 And the floor was just as strong as the sills,

And the panels just as strong as the floor,
 And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
 And the back crossbar as strong as the fore,
 And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
 And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
 In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five !
 This morning the parson takes a drive.
 Now, small boys, get out of the way !
 Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
 Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
 'Huddup !' said the parson. — Off went they.
 The parson was working his Sunday's text, —
 Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
 At what the — Moses — was coming next.
 All at once the horse stood still,
 Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
 First a shiver, and then a thrill,
 Then something decidedly like a spill, —
 And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
 At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock, —
 Just the hour of the Earthquake shock !
 What do you think the parson found,
 When he got up and stared around ?
 The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
 As if it had been to the mill and ground !
 You see, of course, if you 're not a dunce,
 How it went to pieces all at once, —
 All at once, and nothing first, —
 Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
 Logic is logic. That 's all I say.

Edgar Allan Poe [1809-1849]

ROMANCE

Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
 With drowsy head and folded wing,
 Among the green leaves as they shake
 Far down within some shadowy lake,
 To me a painted paroquet
 Hath been — a most familiar bird —

Taught me my alphabet to say —
 To lisp my very earliest word
 While in the wild wood I did lie,
 A child — with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
 So shake the very Heaven on high
 With tumult as they thunder by,
 I have no time for idle cares
 Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
 And when an hour with calmer wings
 Its down upon my spirit flings —
 That little time with lyre and rhyme
 To while away — forbidden things !
 My heart would feel to be a crime
 Unless it trembled with the strings.

SONNET — TO SCIENCE

Science ! true daughter of Old Time thou art !
 Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
 Why preyst thou thus upon the poet's heart,
 Vulture, whose wings are dull realities ?
 How should he love thee ? or how deem thee wise,
 Who wouldest not leave him in his wandering
 To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
 Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing ?
 Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car ?
 And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
 To seek a shelter in some happier star ?
 Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
 The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
 The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree ?

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
 Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
 To the glory that was Greece,
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
 How statue-like I see thee stand,
 The agate lamp within thy hand!
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
 Are Holy-Land!

ISRAFEL

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 'Whose heart-strings are a lute;'
 None sing so wildly well
 As the angel Israfel,
 And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
 Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
 Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
 In her highest noon,
 The enamored moon
 blushes with love,
 While, to listen, the red levin
 (With the rapid Pleiads, even,
 Which were seven,)
 Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
 And the other listening things)
 That Israfeli's fire
 Is owing to that lyre
 By which he sits and sings —
 The trembling living wire
 Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
 Where deep thoughts are a duty —
 Where Love 's a grown-up God —
 Where the Houri glances are
 Imbued with all the beauty
 Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,
 Israfeli, who despisest
 An unimpassioned song;
 To thee the laurels belong,
 Best bard, because the wisest!
 Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
 With thy burning measures suit —
 Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
 With the fervor of thy lute —
 Well may the stars be mute !

Yes, Heaven is thine ; but this
 Is a world of sweets and sours ;
 Our flowers are merely — flowers,
 And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
 Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
 Where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,
 He might not sing so wildly well
 A mortal melody,
 While a bolder note than this might swell
 From my lyre within the sky.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo ! Death has reared himself a throne
 In a strange city lying alone
 Far down within the dim West,
 Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
 Have gone to their eternal rest.
 There shrines and palaces and towers
 (Time-eaten towers that tremble not !)
 Resemble nothing that is ours.
 Around, by lifting winds forgot,
 Resignedly beneath the sky
 The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
 On the long night-time of that town ;
 But light from out the lurid sea
 Streams up the turrets silently —
 Gleams up the pinnacles far and free —
 Up domes — up spires — up kingly halls —
 Up fanes — up Babylon-like walls —
 Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
 Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers —
 Up many and many a marvellous shrine
 Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
 The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
 The melancholy waters lie.
 So blend the turrets and shadows there
 That all seem pendulous in air,
 While from a proud tower in the town
 Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
 Yawn level with the luminous waves
 But not the riches there that lie
 In each idol's diamond eye —
 Not the gayly-jewelled dead
 Tempt the waters from their bed ;
 For no ripples curl, alas !
 Along that wilderness of glass —
 No swellings tell that winds may be
 Upon some far-off happier sea —
 No heavings hint that winds have been
 On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air !
 The wave — there is a movement there !
 As if the towers had thrust aside,
 In slightly sinking, the dull tide —
 As if their tops had feebly given
 A void within the filmy Heaven.
 The waves have now a redder glow —
 The hours are breathing faint and low —
 And when, amid no earthly moans,
 Down, down that town shall settle hence,
 Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
 Shall do it reverence.

LE NORE

Ah, broken is the golden bowl ! the spirit flown forever !
 Let the bell toll ! — a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river ;
 And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear ? — weep now or never more !
 See ! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore !
 Come ! let the burial rite be read — the funeral song be sung ! —
 An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young —
 A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

'Wretches ! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,
 'And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her — that she died !
 'How shall the ritual, then, be read ? — the requiem how be sung
 'By you — by yours, the evil eye, — by yours, the slanderous tongue
 'That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young ?'

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
 Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!
 The sweet Lenore hath 'gone before,' with Hope, that flew beside,
 Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy
 bride —

For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so lowly lies,
 The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes —
 The life still there, upon her hair — the death upon her eyes.

'Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise.
 'But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of old days!
 'Let *no* bell toll! — lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
 'Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damnèd Earth.
 'To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven —
 'From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven —
 'From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of
 Heaven.'

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Once it smiled a silent dell
 Where the people did not dwell;
 They had gone unto the wars,
 Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
 Nightly, from their azure towers,
 To keep watch above the flowers,
 In the midst of which all day
 The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visiter shall confess
 The sad valley's restlessness.
 Nothing there is motionless —
 Nothing save the airs that brood
 Over the magic solitude.
 Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
 That palpitate like the chill seas
 Around the misty Hebrides!
 Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
 That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
 Uneasily, from morn till even,
 Over the violets there that lie
 In myriad types of the human eye —
 Over the lilies there that wave
 And weep above a nameless grave!
 They wave: — from out their fragrant tops
 Eternal dews come down in drops.
 They weep: — from off their delicate stems
 Perennial tears descend in gems.

TO ONE IN PARADISE

Thou wast all that to me, love,
 For which my soul did pine —
 A green isle in the sea, love,
 A fountain and a shrine,
 All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
 And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last !
 Ah, starry Hope ! that didst arise
 But to be overcast !
 A voice from out the Future cries,
 'On ! on !' — but o'er the Past
 (Dim gulf !) my spirit hovering lies
 Mute, motionless, aghast !

For, alas ! alas ! with me
 The light of Life is o'er !
 'No more — no more — no more —'
 (Such language holds the solemn sea
 To the sands upon the shore)
 Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
 Or the stricken eagle soar !

And all my days are trances,
 And all my nightly dreams
 Are where thy gray eye glances,
 And where thy footstep gleams —
 In what ethereal dances,
 By what eternal streams.

THE HAUNTED PALACE

In the greenest of our valleys
 By good angels tenanted,
 Once a fair and stately palace —
 Radiant palace — reared its head.
 In the monarch Thought's dominion —
 It stood there !
 Never seraph spread a pinion
 Over fabric half so fair !

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
 On its roof did float and flow,
 (This — all this — was in the olden
 Time long ago,)

And every gentle air that dallied,
 In that sweet day,
 Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
 A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
 Through two luminous windows, saw
 Spirits moving musically,
 To a lute's well-tunèd law,
 Round about a throne where, sitting,
 (Porphyrogenë !)
 In state his glory well befitting,
 The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
 Was the fair palace door,
 Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing
 And sparkling evermore,
 A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
 Was but to sing,
 In voices of surpassing beauty,
 The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
 Assailed the monarch's high estate.
 (Ah, let us mourn ! — for never morrow
 Shall dawn upon him desolate !)
 And round about his home the glory
 That blushed and bloomed,
 Is but a dim-remembered story
 Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
 Through the red-litten windows see
 Vast forms, that move fantastically
 To a discordant melody,
 While, like a ghastly rapid river,
 Through the pale door
 A hideous throng rush out forever
 And laugh — but smile no more.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo ! 't is a gala night
 Within the lonesome latter years !
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
 In veils, and drowned in tears,

Sit in a theatre, to see
 A play of hopes and fears,
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
 Mutter and mumble low,
 And hither and thither fly —
 Mere puppets they, who come and go
 At bidding of vast formless things
 That shift the scenery to and fro,
 Flapping from out their Condor wings
 Invisible Woe !

That motley drama — oh, be sure
 It shall not be forgot !
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,
 By a crowd that seize it not,
 Through a circle that ever returneth in
 To the self-same spot,
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
 And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
 A crawling shape intrude !
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out
 The scenic solitude !
 It writhes ! — it writhes ! — with mortal pangs
 The mimes become its food,
 And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
 In human gore imbued.

Out — out are the lights — out all !
 And, over each quivering form,
 The curtain, a funeral pall,
 Comes down with the rush of a storm,
 While the angels, all pallid and wan,
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm
 That the play is the tragedy, ‘Man,’
 And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

DREAM-LAND

By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
 On a black throne reigns upright,

I have reached these lands but newly
 From an ultimate dim Thule —
 From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
 Out of SPACE — out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
 And chasms, and caves and Titan woods,
 With forms that no man can discover
 For the tears that drip all over ;
 Mountains toppling evermore
 Into seas without a shore ;
 Seas that restlessly aspire,
 Surging, unto skies of fire ;
 Lakes that endlessly outspread
 Their lone waters — lone and dead, —
 Their still waters — still and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
 Their lone waters, lone and dead, —
 Their sad waters, sad and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily, —
 By the mountains — near the river
 Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever, —
 By the gray woods, — by the swamp
 Where the toad and the newt encamp, —
 By the dismal tarns and pools
 Where dwell the Ghouls, —
 By each spot the most unholy —
 In each nook most melancholy, —
 There the traveller meets, aghast,
 Sheeted Memories of the Past —
 Shrouded forms that start and sigh
 As they pass the wanderer by —
 White-robed forms of friends long given,
 In agony, to the Earth — and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
 'T is a peaceful, soothing region —
 For the spirit that walks in shadow
 'T is — oh 't is an Eldorado !
 But the traveller, travelling through it,
 May not — dare not openly view it ;
 Never its mysteries are exposed
 To the weak human eye unclosed ;
 So wills its King, who hath forbid
 The uplifting of the fringed lid ;

And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

THE RAVEN

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore —
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
'T is some visiter,' I muttered, 'tapping at my chamber door —
Only this and nothing more.'

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December ;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow ; — vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore —
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore —
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me — filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before ;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
'T is some visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door —
Some late visiter entreating entrance at my chamber door ; —
This it is and nothing more.'

Presently my soul grew stronger ; hesitating then no longer,
'Sir,' said I, 'or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore ;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you' — here I opened wide the door ;
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,
fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before ;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, 'Lenore !'
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word 'Lenore !'
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
 Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
 ‘Surely,’ said I, ‘surely that is something at my window lattice;
 Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore —
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; —
 ‘T is the wind and nothing more!’

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter
 In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door —
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door —

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
 ‘Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,’ I said, ‘art sure no
 craven,
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly
 shore —

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!’
 Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
 Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore;
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door —
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
 With such name as ‘Nevermore.’

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
 Nothing farther then he uttered — not a feather then he fluttered —
 Till I scarcely more than muttered ‘Other friends have flown be-
 fore —

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.’
 Then the bird said ‘Nevermore.’

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 ‘Doubtless,’ said I, ‘what it utters is its only stock and store
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore —
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
 Of “Never — nevermore.”’

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and
 door;

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore —
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking ‘Nevermore.’

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core ;
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o’er,
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore !

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen
 censer
 Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
 ‘Wretch,’ I cried, ‘thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he
 hath sent thee
 Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore ;
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore !’
Quoth the Raven ‘Nevermore.’

‘Prophet !’ said I, ‘thing of evil ! prophet still, if bird or devil ! —
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted —
 On this home by Horror haunted — tell me truly, I implore —
 Is there — *is* there balm in Gilead ? — tell me — tell me, I implore !’
Quoth the Raven ‘Nevermore.’

‘Prophet !’ said I, ‘thing of evil ! — prophet still, if bird or devil !
 By that Heaven that bends above us — by that God we both adore —
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore —
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.’
Quoth the Raven ‘Nevermore.’

‘Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend !’ I shrieked, up-
 starting —
 ‘Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore !
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken !
 Leave my loneliness unbroken ! — quit the bust above my door !
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my
 door !’
Quoth the Raven ‘Nevermore.’

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door ;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
 And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor ;
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted — nevermore !

EULALIE — A SONG

I dwelt alone
 In a world of moan,
 And my soul was a stagnant tide,
 Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride —
 Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.

Ah, less — less bright
 The stars of the night
 Than the eyes of the radiant girl !
 And never a flake
 That the vapor can make
 With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
 Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl —
 Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and care-
 less curl.

Now Doubt — now Pain
 Come never again,
 For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
 And all day long
 Shines, bright and strong,
 Astarte within the sky,
 While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye —
 While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

ULALUME

The skies they were ashen and sober ;
 The leaves they were crisped and sere —
 The leaves they were withering and sere ;
 It was night in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year ;
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
 In the misty mid region of Weir —
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul —
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.

These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriae rivers that roll —
 ' As the lavas that restlessly roll
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
 In the ultimate climes of the pole —
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere —
 Our memories were treacherous and sere —
 For we knew not the month was October,
 And we marked not the night of the year —
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year !)
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber —
 (Though once we had journeyed down here) —
 Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
 And star-dials pointed to morn —
 As the star-dials hinted of morn —
 At the end of our path a liquefiant
 And nebulous lustre was born,
 Out of which a miraculous crescent
 Arose with a duplicate horn —
 Astarte's bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said — 'She is warmer than Dian :
 She rolls through an ether of sighs —
 She revels in a region of sighs :
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies
 And has come past the stars of the Lion
 To point us the path to the skies —
 To the Lethean peace of the skies —
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes —
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes.'

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said — ' Sadly this star I mistrust —
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust : —

Oh, hasten! — oh, let us not linger!
 Oh, fly! — let us fly! — for we must.'
 In terror she spoke, letting sink her
 Wings until they trailed in the dust —
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust —
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied — 'This is nothing but dreaming:
 Let us on by this tremulous light!
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
 Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night: —
 See! — it flickers up the sky through the night!
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
 And be sure it will lead us aright —
 We safely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright,
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night.'

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
 And tempted her out of her gloom —
 And conquered her scruples and gloom;
 And we passed to the end of the vista,
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb —
 By the door of a legended tomb;
 And I said — 'What is written, sweet sister,
 On the door of this legended tomb?'
 She replied — 'Ulalume — Ulalume —
 'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!'

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
 As the leaves that were crisped and sere —
 As the leaves that were withering and sere,
 And I cried — 'It was surely October
 On *this* very night of last year
 That I journeyed — I journeyed down here —
 That I brought a dread burden down here —
 On this night of all nights in the year,
 Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber —
 This misty mid region of Weir —
 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
 This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.'

FOR ANNIE

Thank Heaven ! the crisis —
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last —
And the fever called ‘Living’
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length —
But no matter ! — I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead —
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart : — ah that horrible,
Horrible throbbing !

The sickness — the nausea —
The pitiless pain —
Have ceased with the fever
That maddened my brain —
With the fever called ‘Living’
That burned in my brain.

And oh ! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated — the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the napthaline river
Of Passion accurst : —
I have drank of a water
That quenches all thirst : —
Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,

From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground —
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah ! let it never
Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
And narrow my bed ;
For a man never slept
In a different bed —
And, to sleep, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
Regretting, its roses —
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses :

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
About it, of pansies —
A rosemary odor,
Commingled with pansies —
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie —
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast —
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm —

To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
That you fancy me dead —
And I rest so contentedly,
Now, in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
That you fancy me dead —
That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead : —

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars of the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie —
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie —
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE ;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love —
I and my ANNABEL LEE —
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;
So that her high-born kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me —
 Yes! — that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we —
 Of many far wiser than we —
 And neither the angels in heaven above,
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE :

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE,
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE :
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling — my darling — my life and my bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea —
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

EL DORADO

Gaily bedight,
 A gallant knight,
 In sunshine and in shadow,
 Had journeyed long,
 Singing a song,
 In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old —
 This knight so bold —
 And o'er his heart a shadow
 Fell as he found
 No spot of ground
 That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
 Failed him at length,
 He met a pilgrim shadow —
 ‘Shadow,’ said he,
 ‘Where can it be —
 This land of Eldorado?’

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado.'

Henry David Thoreau [1817-1862]

SIC VITA

I am a parcel of vain strivings tied
By chance bond together,
Dangling this way and that, their links
Were made so loose and wide,
Methinks,
For milder weather.

A bunch of violets without their roots,
And sorrel intermixed,
Encircled by a wisp of straw
Once coiled about their shoots,
The law
By which I 'm fixed.

A nosegay which Time clutched from out
Those fair Elysian fields,
With weeds and broken stems, in haste,
Doth make the rabble rout
That waste
The day he yields.

And here I bloom for a short hour unseen,
Drinking my juices up,
With no root in the land
To keep my branches green,
But stand
In a bare cup.

Some tender buds were left upon my stem
In mimicry of life,
But ah ! the children will not know,
Till time has withered them,
The woe
With which they 're rife.

But now I see I was not plucked for nought,
 And after in life's vase
 Of glass set while I might survive,
 But by a kind hand brought
 Alive
 To a strange place.

That stock thus thinned will soon redeem its hours,
 And by another year,
 Such as God knows, with freer air,
 More fruits and fairer flowers
 Will bear,
 While I droop here.

INSPIRATION

Whate'er we leave to God, God does,
 And blesses us;
 The work we choose should be our own,
 God leaves alone.

If with light head erect I sing,
 Though all the Muses lend their force,
 From my poor love of anything,
 The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope
 Listening behind me for my wit,
 With faith superior to hope,
 More anxious to keep back than forward it;

Making my soul accomplice there
 Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
 Then will the verse for ever wear —
 Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

Always the general show of things
 Floats in review before my mind,
 And such true love and reverence brings,
 That sometimes I forget that I am blind.

But now there comes unsought, unseen,
 Some clear divine electuary,
 And I, who had but sensual been,
 Grow sensible, and as God is, am wary.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before,
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the range of sight,
New earths and skies and seas around,
And in my day the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony
Pierces my soul through all its din,
As through its utmost melody, —
Farther behind than they, farther within.

More swift its bolt than lightning is,
Its voice than thunder is more loud,
It doth expand my privacies
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

It speaks with such authority,
With so serene and lofty tone,
That idle Time runs gadding by,
And leaves me with Eternity alone.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life,
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'T is peace's end and war's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
By a grey wall or some chance place,
Unseasoning Time, insulting June,
And vexing day with its presuming face.

Such fragrance round my couch it makes,
More rich than are Arabian drugs,
That my soul scents its life and wakes
The body up beneath its perfumed rugs.

Such is the Muse, the heavenly maid,
The star that guides our mortal course,
Which shows where life's true kernel 's laid,
Its wheat's fine flour, and its undying force.

She with one breath attunes the spheres,
And also my poor human heart,
With one impulse propels the years
Around, and gives my throbbing pulse its start.

I will not doubt for evermore,
 Nor falter from a steadfast faith,
 For though the system be turned o'er,
 God takes not back the word which once he saith.

I will not doubt the love untold
 Which not my worth nor want has bought,
 Which wooed me young, and woes me old,
 And to this evening hath me brought.

My memory I 'll educate
 To know the one historic truth,
 Remembering to the latest date
 The only true and sole immortal youth.

Be but thy inspiration given,
 No matter through what danger sought,
 I 'll fathom hell or climb to heaven,
 And yet esteem that cheap which love has bought.

Fame cannot tempt the bard
 Who 's famous with his God,
 Nor laurel him reward
 Who has his Maker's nod.

THE FISHER'S BOY

My life is like a stroll upon the beach,
 As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
 My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
 Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

My sole employment 't is, and scrupulous care,
 To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
 Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
 Which Ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore :
 They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea ;
 Yet oft I think the ocean they 've sailed o'er
 Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
 Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view ;
 Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
 And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.

THE ATLANTIDES

The smothered streams of love, which flow
More bright than Phlegethon, more low,
Island us ever, like the sea,
In an Atlantic mystery.
Our fabled shores none ever reach,
No mariner has found our beach,
Scarcely our mirage now is seen,
And neighboring waves with floating green,
Yet still the oldest charts contain
Some dotted outline of our main ;
In ancient times midsummer days
Unto the western islands' gaze,
To Teneriffe and the Azores,
Have shown our faint and cloud-like shores.

But sink not yet, ye desolate isles,
Anon your coast with commerce smiles,
And richer freights ye 'll furnish far
Than Africa or Malabar.
Be fair, be fertile evermore,
Ye rumored but untrodden shore ;
Princes and monarchs will contend
Who first unto your lands shall send,
And pawn the jewels of the crown
To call your distant soil their own.

Sea and land are but his neighbors,
And companions in his labors,
Who on the ocean's verge and firm land's end
Doth long and truly seek his Friend.
Many men dwell far inland,
But he alone sits on the strand.
Whether he ponders men or books,
Always still he seaward looks,
Marine news he ever reads,
And the slightest glances heeds,
Feels the sea breeze on his cheek,
At each word the landsmen speak,
In every companion's eye
A sailing vessel doth descry ;
In the ocean's sullen roar
From some distant port he hears,
Of wrecks upon a distant shore,
And the ventures of past years.

SYMPATHY

Lately, alas! I knew a gentle boy,
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,
But after manned him for her own stronghold.

On every side he open was as day,
That you might see no lack of strength within;
For walls and ports do only serve alway
For a pretence to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Caesar was victorious,
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame;
In other sense this youth was glorious,
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

No strength went out to get him victory,
When all was income of its own accord;
For where he went none other was to see,
But all were parcel of their noble lord.

He forayed like the subtle haze of summer,
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,
And revolutions works without a murmur,
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,
I quite forgot my homage to confess;
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
I might have loved him, had I loved him less.

Each moment as we nearer drew to each,
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,
And less acquainted than when first we met.

We two were one while we did sympathise,
So could we not the simplest bargain drive;
And what avails it, now that we are wise,
If absence doth this doubleness contrive?

Eternity may not the chance repeat;
But I must tread my single way alone,
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,
 For elegy has other subject none;
 Each strain of music in my ears shall ring
 Knell of departure from that other one.

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy;
 With fitting strain resound, ye woods and fields;
 Sorrow is dearer in such case to me
 Than all the joys other occasion yields.

Is 't then too late the damage to repair?
 Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp has reft
 The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
 But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,
 Though it be scented in the morning air,
 Still shall we be truest acquaintances,
 Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

TO THE MAIDEN IN THE EAST

Low in the eastern sky
 Is set thy glancing eye;
 And though its gracious light
 Ne'er riseth to my sight,
 Yet every star that climbs
 Above the gnarled limbs
 Of yonder hill,
 Conveys thy gentle will.

Believe I knew thy thought,
 And that the zephyrs brought
 Thy kindest wishes through,
 As mine they bear to you;
 That some attentive cloud
 Did pause amid the crowd
 Over my head,
 While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,
 And that the flower-bells rung,
 That herbs exhaled their scent,
 And beasts knew what was meant,
 The trees a welcome waved,
 And lakes their margins laved,
 When thy free mind
 To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thy eastern skies did shroud ;
The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,
Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash.

From yonder comes the sun,
But soon his course is run,
Rising to trivial day
Along his dusty way ;
But thy noontide completes
Only auroral heats,
Nor ever sets,
To hasten vain regrets.

Direct thy pensive eye
Into the western sky ;
And when the evening star
Does glimmer from afar
Upon the mountain line,
Accept it for a sign
That I am near,
And thinking of thee here.

I 'll be thy Mercury,
Thou Cytherea to me,
Distinguished by thy face
The earth shall learn my place ;
As near beneath thy light
Will I outwear the night,
With mingled ray
Leading the westward way.

Still will I strive to be
As if thou wert with me ;
Whatever path I take,
It shall be for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,
As thou wert by my side,
Without a root
To trip thy gentle foot.

I 'll walk with gentle pace,
And choose the smoothest place,

And careful dip the oar,
 And shun the winding shore,
 And gently steer my boat
 Where water-lilies float,
 And cardinal flowers
 Stand in their sylvan bowers.

FREE LOVE

My love must be as free
 As is the eagle's wing,
 Hovering o'er land and sea
 And everything.

I must not dim my eye
 In thy saloon,
 I must not leave my sky
 And nightly moon.

Be not the fowler's net
 Which stays my flight,
 And craftily is set
 T' allure the sight.

But be the favoring gale
 That bears me on,
 And still doth fill my sail
 When thou art gone.

I cannot leave my sky
 For thy caprice,
 True love would soar as high
 As heaven is.

The eagle would not brook
 Her mate thus won,
 Who trained his eye to look
 Beneath the sun.

RUMORS FROM AN AEOLIAN HARP

There is a vale which none hath seen,
 Where foot of man has never been,
 Such as here lives with toil and strife,
 An anxious and a sinful life.

There every virtue has its birth,
 Ere it descends upon the earth,

And thither every deed returns,
Which in the generous bosom burns.

There love is warm, and youth is young,
And poetry is yet unsung,
For Virtue still adventures there,
And freely breathes her native air.

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear its vesper bell,
And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

LINES

Though all the Fates should prove unkind,
Leave not your native land behind.
The ship, becalmed, at length stands still ;
The steed must rest beneath the hill ;
But swiftly still our fortunes pace
To find us out in every place.

The vessel, though her masts be firm,
Beneath her copper bears a worm ;
Around the Cape, across the Line,
Till fields of ice her course confine ;
It matters not how smooth the breeze,
How shallow or how deep the seas,

Whether she bears Manilla twine,
Or in her hold Madeira wine,
Or China teas, or Spanish hides,
In port or quarantine she rides ;
Far from New England's blustering shore,
New England's worm her bulk shall bore,
And sink her in the Indian seas, —
Twine, wine, and hides, and China teas.

STANZAS

Nature doth have her dawn each day,
But mine are far between ;
Content, I cry, for, sooth to say,
Mine brightest are, I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,
Though it be her noontide,

Her fairest field in shadow lies,
Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,
Conversing with my mate,
But if we interchange one ray,
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see
As from some eastern hill,
A brighter morrow rise to me
Than lieth in her skill.

As 't were two summer days in one,
Two Sundays come together,
Our rays united make one sun,
With fairest summer weather.

THE INWARD MORNING

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
Which outward nature wears,
And in its fashion's hourly change
It all things else repairs.

In vain I look for change abroad,
And can no difference find,
Till some new ray of peace uncalled
Illumes my inmost mind.

What is it gilds the trees and clouds,
And paints the heavens so gay,
But yonder fast-abiding light
With its unchanging ray?

Lo, when the sun streams through the wood
Upon a winter's morn,
Where'er his silent beams intrude
The murky night is gone.

How could the patient pine have known
The morning breeze would come,
Or humble flowers anticipate
The insect's noonday hum, —

Till the new light with morning cheer
From far streamed through the aisles,
And nimbly told the forest trees
For many stretching miles?

I've heard within my inmost soul
Such cheerful morning news,
In the horizon of my mind
Have seen such orient hues,

As in the twilight of the dawn,
When the first birds awake,
Are heard within some silent wood,
Where they the small twigs break,

Or in the eastern skies are seen,
Before the sun appears,
The harbingers of summer heats
Which from afar he bears.

MIST

Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain-head and source of rivers,
Dew-cloth, dream-drapery,
And napkin spread by fays;
Drifting meadow of the air,
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,
And in whose fenny labyrinth
The bittern booms and heron wades;
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,—
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields.

SMOKE

Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight;
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou, my incense, upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

HAZE

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye;
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,
Breakers of air, billows of heat,
Fine summer spray on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged,
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without song, —
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

MOUNTAINS

With frontier strength ye stand your ground,
With grand content ye circle round,
Tumultuous silence for all sound,
Ye distant nursery of rills,
Monadnock, and the Peterborough hills; —
Firm argument that never stirs,
Outcircling the philosophers, —
Like some vast fleet
Sailing through rain and sleet,
Through winter's cold and summer's heat;
Still holding on upon your high emprise,
Until ye find a shore amid the skies;
Not skulking close to land,
With cargo contraband;
For they who sent a venture out by ye
Have set the Sun to see
Their honesty.
Ships of the line, each one,
Ye westward run,
Convoying clouds,
Which cluster in your shrouds,
Always before the gale,
Under a press of sail,
With weight of metal all untold; —
I seem to feel ye in my firm seat here,
Immeasurable depth of hold,
And breadth of beam, and length of running gear.

Methinks ye take luxurious pleasure
In your novel western leisure;
So cool your brows and freshly blue,
As Time had nought for ye to do;
For ye lie at your length,
An unappropriated strength,
Unhewn primeval timber
For knees so stiff, for masts so limber,
The stock of which new earths are made,
One day to be our western trade,
Fit for the stanchions of a world
Which through the seas of space is hurled.

While we enjoy a lingering ray,
Ye still o'ertop the western day,
Reposing yonder on God's croft,
Like solid stacks of hay.
So bold a line as ne'er was writ
On any page by human wit;
The forest glows as if
An enemy's camp-fires shone
Along the horizon,
Or the day's funeral pyre
Were lighted there;
Edged with silver and with gold,
The clouds hang o'er in damask fold,
And with fresh depth of amber light
The west is dight,
Where still a few rays slant,
That even Heaven seems extravagant.

Watatic Hill
Lies on the horizon's sill
Like a child's toy left overnight,
And other duds to left and right;
On the earth's edge, mountains and trees
Stand as they were on air graven,
Or as the vessels in a haven
Await the morning breeze.

I fancy even
Through your defiles windeth the way to heaven;
And yonder still, in spite of history's page,
Linger the golden and the silver age;
Upon the laboring gale
The news of future centuries is brought,
And of new dynasties of thought,
From your remotest vale.

But special I remember thee,
 Wachusett, who like me
 Standest alone without society.
 Thy far blue eye,
 A remnant of the sky,
 Seen through the clearing of the gorge,
 Or from the windows of the forge,
 Doth leaven all it passes by.
 Nothing is true,
 But stands 'tween me and you,
 Thou western pioneer,
 Who know'st not shame nor fear,
 By venturous spirit driven
 Under the eaves of heaven,
 And canst expand thee there,
 And breathe enough of air.
 Even beyond the West
 Thou migratest
 Into unclouded tracts,
 Without a pilgrim's axe,
 Cleaving thy road on high
 With thy well-tempered brow,
 And mak'st thyself a clearing in the sky.
 Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
 Thy pastime from thy birth,
 Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other, —
 May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

THE RESPECTABLE FOLKS

The respectable folks, —
 Where dwell they?
 They whisper in the oaks,
 And they sigh in the hay ;
 Summer and winter, night and day,
 Out on the meadow, there dwell they.
 They never die,
 Nor snivel, nor cry,
 Nor ask our pity
 With a wet eye.
 A sound estate they ever mend,
 To every asker readily lend ;
 To the ocean wealth,
 To the meadow health,
 To Time his length,
 To the rocks strength,

To the stars light,
 To the weary night,
 To the busy day,
 To the idle play ;
 And so their good cheer never ends,
 For all are their debtors, and all their friends.

MY PRAYER

Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf
 Than that I may not disappoint myself ;
 That in my action I may soar as high
 As I can now discern with this clear eye.

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
 That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
 Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
 They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me.

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
 And my life practise more than my tongue saith ;

That my low conduct may not show,
 Nor my relenting lines,
 That I thy purpose did not know,
 Or overrated thy designs.

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

There came a youth upon the earth,
 Some thousand years ago,
 Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
 Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
 He stretched some chords, and drew
 Music that made men's bosoms swell
 Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
 Pure taste by right divine,
 Decreed his singing not too bad
 To hear between the cups of wine :

And so, well pleased with being soothed
 Into a sweet half-sleep,
 Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
 And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,
 And yet he used them so,
 That what in other mouths was rough
 In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
 In whom no good they saw;
 And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
 They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
 For idly, hour by hour,
 He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
 Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
 Did teach him all their use,
 For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
 He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
 But, when a glance they caught
 Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
 They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
 And e'en his memory dim,
 Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
 More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew
 Each spot where he had trod,
 Till after-poets only knew
 Their first-born brother as a god.

HEBE

I saw the twinkle of white feet,
 I saw the flash of robes descending;
 Before her ran an influence fleet,
 That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees
 Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,
 It led me on, by sweet degrees
 Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates ;
 With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me ;
 The long-sought Secret's golden gates
 On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp
 Thrilling with godhood ; like a lover
 I sprang the proffered life to clasp ; —
 The beaker fell ; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up ;
 What boots it patch the goblet's splinters ?
 Can Summer fill the icy cup,
 Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's ?

O spendthrift haste ! await the Gods ;
 The nectar crowns the lips of Patience ;
 Haste scatters on unthankful sods
 The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,
 And shuns the hands would seize upon her ;
 Follow thy life, and she will sue
 To pour for thee the cup of honor.

FROM "THE BIGLOW PAPERS"

I

THE PIOUS EDITOR'S CREEED

I du believe in Freedom's cause,
 Ez fur away ez Payris is ;
 I love to see her stick her claws
 In them infarnal Phayrisees ;
 It 's wal enough agin a king
 To dror resolves an' triggers, —
 But libbaty 's a kind o' thing
 Thet don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people want
 A tax on teas an' coffees,

Thet nothin' aint extravgunt,—
 Purvidin' I 'm in office;
 Fer I hev loved my country sence
 My eye-teeth filled their sockets,
 An' Uncle Sam I reverence,
 Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe in *any* plan
 O' levyin' the texes,
 Ez long ez, like a lumberman,
 I get jest wut I axes,
 I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,
 Because it kind o' rouses
 The folks to vote, — an' keeps us in
 Our quiet custom-houses.

I du believe it 's wise an' good
 To sen' out furrin missions,
 Thet is, on sartin understood
 An' orthydox conditions; —
 I mean nine thousan' dolls per ann.,
 Nine thousan' more fer outfit,
 An' me to recommend a man
 The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways
 O' prayin' an' convartin';
 The bread comes back in many days,
 An' buttered, tu, fer sartin;
 I mean in preyin' till one busts
 On wut the party chooses,
 An' in convartin' public trusts
 To very privit uses.

I du believe hard coin the stuff
 Fer 'lectioneers to spout on;
 The people 's ollers soft enough
 To make hard money out on;
 Dear Uncle Sam pervesides fer his,
 An' gives a good-sized junk to all, —
 I don't care *how* hard money is,
 Ez long ez mine 's paid punctooal.

I du believe with all my soul
 In the gret Press's freedom,
 To pint the people to the goal
 An' in the traces lead 'em;

Palsied the arm thet forges yokes
 At my fat contracts squintin',
 An' withered be the nose thet pokes
 Inter the gov'ment printin'!

I du believe thet I should give
 Wut 's his'n unto Cæsar,
 Fer it 's by him I move an' live,
 Frum him my bread an' cheese air;
 I du believe thet all o' me
 Doth bear his superscription,—
 Will, conscience, honor, honesty,
 An' things o' thet description.

I du believe in prayer an' praise
 To him thet hez the grantin'
 O' jobs, — in every thin' thet pays,
 But most of all in CANTIN';
 This doth my cup with marcies fill,
 This lays all thought o' sin to rest,
 I *don't* believe in princerple,
 But oh, I *du* in interest.

I du believe in bein' this
 Or thet, ez it may happen
 One way or 't other hendiest is
 To ketch the people nappin';
 It aint by princerbles nor men
 My preudunt course is steadied,—
 I scent wich pays the best, an' then
 Go into it baldheaded.

I du believe thet holdin' slaves
 Comes nat'r'al to a Presidunt,
 Let 'lone the rowdedow it saves
 To hev a wal-broke precedunt;
 Fer any office, small or gret,
 I could n't ax with no face,
 'uthout I 'd ben, thru dry an' wet,
 Th' unrizzest kind o' doughface.

I du believe wutever trash
 'll keep the people in blindness,
 Thet we the Mexicuns can thrash
 Right inter brotherly kindness,
 Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n' ball
 Air good-will's strongest magnets,

Thet peace, to make it stick at all,
Must be druv in with bagnets.

In short, I firmly du believe
 In Humbug generally,
Fer it 's a thing thet I perceive
 To hev a solid vally;
This heth my faithful shepherd ben,
 In pasturs sweet heth led me,
An' this 'll keep the people green
 To feed ez they hev fed me.

II

THE COURТИ'

God makes sech nights, all white an' still
 Fur 'z you can look or listen,
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,
 All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
 An' peeked in thru' the winder,
An' there sot Huldy all alone,
 'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
 With half a cord o' wood in —
There war n't no stoves (tell comfort died)
 To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
 Towards the pootiest, bless her,
An' leetle flames danced all about
 The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
 An' in amongst 'em rusted
The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young
 Fetched back f'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
 Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',
An' she looked full ez rosy agin
 Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'T was kin' o' kingdom-come to look
 On sech a blessed cretur,
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
 Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
 Clear grit an' human natur',
 None could n't quicker pitch a ton
 Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He 'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
 Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
 Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells —
 All is, he could n't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run
 All crinkly like curled maple,
 The side she breshed felt full o' sun
 Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
 Ez hisn in the choir;
 My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,
 She knowed the Lord was nigher.

An' she 'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
 When her new meetin'-bunnet
 Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair
 O' blue eyes sot upun it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*
 She seemed to 've gut a new soul,
 For she felt sartin-sure he 'd come,
 Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
 A-raspin' on the scraper, —
 All ways to once her feelins flew
 Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
 Some doubtfle o' the sekle,
 His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
 But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
 Ez though she wished him furder,
 An' on her apples kep' to work,
 Parin' away like murder.

'You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?'
 'Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin'' —
 'To see my Ma? She 's sprinklin' clo'es
 Agin to-morrer's i'nin'.'

To say why gals acts so or so,
 Or don't, 'ould be persumin';
 Mebby to mean yes an' say no
 Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
 Then stood a spell on t' other,
 An' on which one he felt the wust
 He could n't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, 'I 'd better call agin;'
 Says she, 'Think likely, Mister:'
 Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
 An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips, .
 Huldy sot pale ez ashes,
 All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
 An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind
 Whose naturs never vary,
 Like streams that keep a summer mind
 Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
 Too tight for all expressin',
 Tell mother see how metters stood,
 An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide
 Down to the Bay o' Fundy,
 An' all I know is they was cried
 In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

MONNA LISA

She gave me all that woman can,
 Nor her soul's nunnery forego,
 A confidence that man to man
 Without remorse can never show.

Rare art, that can the sense refine
 Till not a pulse rebellious stirs,
 And, since she never can be mine,
 Makes it seem sweeter to be hers!

AUSPEX

My heart, I cannot still it,
 Nest that had song-birds in it;
 And when the last shall go,
 The dreary days, to fill it,
 Instead of lark or linnet,
 Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,
 Without the passion stronger
 That skyward longs and sings, —
 Woe's me, I shall be lonely
 When I can feel no longer
 The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,
 Like birds the brown leaves hover;
 But it will not be long
 Before the wild confusion
 Fall wavering down to cover
 The poet and his song.

Walt Whitman [1819-1892]

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

There was a child went forth every day,
 And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
 And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of
 the day,
 Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
 And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red
 clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird,
 And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the
 mare's foal and cow's calf,
 And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side,
 And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and
 the beautiful curious liquid,
 And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part
 of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of
 him,
 Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn, and the
 esculent roots of the garden,

And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward,
and wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the
tavern whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot negro boy
and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.
His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had con-
ceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome
odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the
yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what is real, the
thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious
whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not flashes
and specks what are they?
The streets themselves and the façades of houses, and goods in the
windows,
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge crossing at
the ferries,
The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river be-
tween,
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of
white or brown two miles off,
The schooner near by sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat
slack-tow'd astern,
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away
solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh
and shore mud,
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who
now goes, and will always go forth every day.

THIS COMPOST

I

Something startles me where I thought I was safest;
 I withdraw from the still woods I loved;
 I will not go now on the pastures to walk;
 I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my lover the sea;
 I will not touch my flesh to the earth, as to other flesh, to renew me.

O how can it be that the ground does not sicken?
 How can you be alive, you growths of spring?
 How can you furnish health, you blood of herbs, roots, orchards,
 grain?
 Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses within you?
 Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour dead?

Where have you disposed of their carcasses?
 Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations;
 Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat?
 I do not see any of it upon you to-day — or perhaps I am deceiv'd;
 I will run a furrow with my plough — I will press my spade through
 the sod, and turn it up underneath;
 I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

II

Behold this compost! behold it well!
 Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person — Yet
 behold!
 The grass of spring covers the prairies,
 The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden,
 The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,
 The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,
 The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its
 graves,
 The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree,
 The he-birds carol mornings and evenings, while the she-birds sit on
 their nests,
 The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,
 The new-born of animals appear — the calf is dropt from the cow,
 the colt from the mare,
 Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves,
 Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk — the lilacs bloom in the
 door-yards;
 The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those
 strata of sour dead.

What chemistry !
 That the winds are really not infectious,
 That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the sea, which
 is so amorous after me,
 That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over with its
 tongues,
 That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have deposited
 themselves in it,
 That all is clean, forever and forever.
 That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,
 That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,
 That the fruits of the apple-orchard, and of the orange-orchard —
 that melons, grapes, peaches, plums, will none of them poison
 me,
 That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease,
 Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what was once a
 catching disease.

III

Now I am terrified at the Earth ! it is that calm and patient,
 It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,
 It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless suc-
 cessions of diseas'd corpses,
 It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor,
 It renews with such unwitting looks, its prodigal, annual, sumptuous
 crops,
 It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings
 from them at last.

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
 Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
 Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
 Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving
 his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
 Down from the shower'd halo,
 Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they
 were alive,
 Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
 From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
 From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings
 I heard,
 From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with
 tears,

From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
 From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
 From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
 From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
 From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
 As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
 Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
 A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
 Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
 I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
 Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
 A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
 When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was
 growing,
 Up this seashore in some briars,
 Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
 And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
 And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
 And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright
 eyes,
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing
 them,
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
 May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
 One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
 Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
 Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
 And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather.
 Over the hoarse surging of the sea,

Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights
after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging — O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land
With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

*Low-hanging moon !
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow ?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate !
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land ! land ! O land !
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again
if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

*O rising stars !
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.*

*O throat ! O trembling throat !
Sound clearer through the atmosphere !
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.*

*Shake out carols !
Solitary here, the night's carols !
Carols of lonesome love ! death's carols !
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon !
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea !
O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft ! sink low !
Soft ! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.*

*Hither my love !
Here I am ! here !
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness ! O in vain !
O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea !
O troubled reflection in the sea !
O throat ! O throbbing heart !
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

*O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
 In the air, in the woods, over fields,
 Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
 But my mate no more, no more with me!
 We two together no more.*

The aria sinking,
 All else continuing, the stars shining,
 The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
 With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
 On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
 The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face
 of the sea almost touching,
 The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the
 atmosphere dallying,
 The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously
 bursting,
 The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
 The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
 The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
 The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
 To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret
 hissing,
 To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird (said the boy's soul) !
 Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
 For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard
 you,
 Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
 And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder
 and more sorrowful than yours,
 A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to
 die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
 O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
 Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
 Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
 Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what
 there in the night,
 By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
 The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
 The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew (it lurks in the night here somewhere) !
O if I am to have so much, let me have more !

A word then (for I will conquer it),
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up — what is it? — I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's
heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all
over,
Death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet gar-
ments, bending aside,)
The sea whisper'd me.

FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES

Facing west from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity, the
land of migrations, look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere,
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice islands,
Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous.
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and
 strong,
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand
 singing on the steamboat deck,
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as
 he stands,
 The wood-cutters's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morn-
 ing, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or
 of the girl sewing or washing,
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
 The day what belongs to the day — at night the party of young
 fellows, robust, friendly,
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

POETS TO COME

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
 Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
 But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than
 before known,
 Arouse! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,
 I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in the dark-
 ness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a
 casual look upon you and then averts his face,
 Leaving it to you to prove and define it,
 Expecting the main things from you.

ONCE I PASS'D THROUGH A
POPULOUS CITY

Once I pass'd through a populous city, imprinting my brain, for
 future use, with its shows, architecture, customs, and traditions.
 Yet now, of all that city, I remember only a woman I casually met
 there, who detain'd me for love of me;
 Day by day and night by night we were together, — All else has
 long been forgotten by me;
 I remember, I say, only that woman who passionately clung to me,
 Again we wander — we love — we separate again;

Again she holds me by the hand — I must not go !
I see her close beside me, with silent lips, sad and tremulous.

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of
dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone
there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and
twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly
love ;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana
solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend or lover near.
I know very well I could not.

I HEAR IT WAS CHARGED AGAINST ME

I hear it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institu-
tions,
But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
(What indeed have I in common with them? or what with the
destruction of them?)
Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every city of these
States inland and seaboard,
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large
that dents the water,
Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument,
The institution of the dear love of comrades.

O MAGNET-SOUTH

O Magnet-South ! O glistening perfumed South ! my South !
O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse and love ! good and evil ! O
all dear to me !
O dear to me my birth-things — all moving things and the trees
where I was born — the grains, plants, rivers,
Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they flow, distant,
over flats of silvery sands or through swamps,

Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw,
the Pedee, the Tombigbee, the Santee, the Coosa and the
Sabine,

O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my soul to haunt their
banks again,

Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes, I float on the Okee-
chobee, I cross the hummock-land or through pleasant openings
or dense forests,

I see the parrots in the woods, I see the papaw-tree and the blossom-
ing titi;

Again, sailing in my coaster on deck, I coast off Georgia, I coast up
the Carolinas,

I see where the live-oak is growing, I see where the yellow-pine, the
scented bay-tree, the lemon and orange, the cypress, the grace-
ful palmetto,

I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico sound through an
inlet, and dart my vision inland;

O the cotton plant! the growing fields of rice, sugar, hemp!

The cactus guarded with thorns, the laurel-tree with large white
flowers,

The range afar, the richness and barrenness, the old woods charged
with mistletoe and trailing moss,

The piney odor and the gloom, the awful natural stillness, (here in
these dense swamps the freebooter carries his gun, and the
fugitive has his conceal'd hut;)

O the strange fascination of these half-known half-impassable
swamps, infested by reptiles, resounding with the bellow of
the alligator, the sad noises of the night-owl and the wild-cat,
and the whirr of the rattlesnake,

The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the forenoon,
singing through the moon-lit night,

The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the opossum;

A Kentucky corn-field, the tall, graceful, long-leav'd corn, slender,
flapping, bright green, with tassels, with beautiful ears each
well-sheath'd in its husk;

O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs, I can stand them not, I
will depart;

O to be a Virginian where I grew up! O to be a Carolinian!

O lodgings irrepressible! O I will go back to old Tennessee and
never wander more.

THE SHIP STARTING

Lo! the unbounded sea!

On its breast a Ship starting, spreading all her sails — an ample
Ship, carrying even her moonsails;

The pennant is flying aloft, as she speeds, she speeds so stately —
below, emulous waves press forward,
They surround the Ship, with shining curving motions, and foam.

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

'Come my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the
seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines
within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high
plateaus,
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental
blood intervein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the North-
ern,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress
(bend your heads all),
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd
mistress,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly
fill'd,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked,
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions press-ing,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!

Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets,
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo
wait behind,
We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!

O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!

(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your
work,)
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?

Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?

Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged nodding
on our way?
Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,

Far, far off the daybreak call — hark! how loud and clear I hear
it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army! — swift! spring to your places,
, Pioneers! O pioneers!

A FARM PICTURE

Through the ample open door of the peaceful country barn,
 A sun-lit pasture field, with cattle and horses feeding;
 And haze, and vista, and the far horizon, fading away.

BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
 Through the windows — through doors — burst like a ruthless
 force,
 Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
 Into the school where the scholar is studying;
 Leave not the bridegroom quiet — no happiness must he have now
 with his bride,
 Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering
 his grain,
 So fierce you whirr and pound you drums — so shrill you bugles
 blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
 Over the traffic of cities — over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
 Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers
 must sleep in those beds,
 No bargainers' bargains by day — no brokers or speculators —
 would they continue?
 Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
 Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
 Then rattle quicker, heavier drums — you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
 Make no parley — stop for no expostulation,
 Mind not the timid — mind not the weeper or prayer,
 Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
 Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
 Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting
 the hearse,
 So strong you thump O terrible drums — so loud you bugles blow.

CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

A line in long array where they wind betwixt green islands,
 They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the sun — hark
 to the musical clank,
 Behold this silvery river, in it the splashing horses loitering stop to
 drink,

Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person a picture,
 the negligent rest on the saddles,
 Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just entering the
 ford — while,
 Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
 The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

BIVOAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE

I see before me now a traveling army halting,
 Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and the orchards of
 summer,
 Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt, in places rising
 high,
 Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall shapes dingly
 seen,
 The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some away up on
 the mountain,
 The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-sized,
 flickering,
 And over all the sky — the sky! far, far out of reach, studded,
 breaking out, the eternal stars.

BY THE BIVOAC'S FITFUL FLAME

By the bivouac's fitful flame,
 A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow —
 but first I note,
 The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim outline,
 The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire, the silence,
 Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving,
 The shrubs and trees (as I lift my eyes they seem to be stealthily
 watching me),
 While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous
 thoughts,
 Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those
 that are far away;
 A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground,
 By the bivouac's fitful flame.

VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night;
 When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side that day,
 One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with a look I
 shall never forget,

One touch of your hand to mine O boy, reach'd up as you lay on the ground,
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle,
Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I made my way,
Found you in death so cold dear comrade, found your body son of responding kisses (never again on earth responding),
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew the moderate night-wind,
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battle-field spreading,
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant silent night,
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh, long, long I gazed,
Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side leaning my chin in my hands,
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you dearest comrade — not a tear, not a word,
Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you my son and my soldier,
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole,
Vigil final for you brave boy, (I could not save you, swift was your death,
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall surely meet again,)
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appear'd,
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form,
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and carefully under feet,
And there and then and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited,
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and battle-field dim,
Vigil for boy of responding kisses (never again on earth responding),
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how as day brighten'd,
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his blanket,
And buried him where he fell.

COME UP FROM THE FIELDS FATHER

Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 't is autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,

Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)
Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry skirmish,
taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

Grieve not so, dear mother (the just-grown daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd),
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

Alas poor boy, he will never be better (nor may-be needs to be better,
that brave and simple soul),
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,

In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,
 O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and
 withdraw,
 To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAYBREAK
 GRAY AND DIM

A sight in camp, in the daybreak gray and dim,
 As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,
 As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital
 tent,
 Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended
 lying,
 Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woolen blanket,
 Gray and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.

Curious I halt and silent stand,
 Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest the first just
 lift the blanket;
 Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-gray'd hair
 and flesh all sunken about the eyes?
 Who are you my dear comrade?

Then to the second I step — and who are you my child and darling?
 Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?

Then to the third — a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of
 beautiful yellow-white ivory;
 Young man I think I know you — I think this face is the face of
 the Christ himself,
 Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST,
 AND THE ROAD UNKNOWN

A march in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown;
 A route through a heavy wood, with muffled steps in the darkness;
 Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant retreating;
 Till after midnight glimmer upon us, the lights of a dim-lighted
 building;
 We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the dim-
 lighted building;
 'T is a large old church at the crossing roads — 't is now an im-
 promptu hospital;
 — Entering but for a minute, I see a sight beyond all the pictures
 and poems ever made:

Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving candles and
 lamps,
 And by one great pitchy torch, stationary, with wild red flame, and
 clouds of smoke ;
 By these crowds, groups of forms, vaguely I see, on the floor, some
 in the pews laid down ;
 At my feet more distinctly, a soldier, a mere lad, in danger of bleed-
 ing to death, (he is shot in the abdomen) ;
 I staunch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face is white as
 a lily,) ;
 Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene, fain to absorb
 it all ;
 Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in obscurity,
 some of them dead ;
 Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell of ether,
 the odor of blood ;
 The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms of soldiers — the yard
 outside also fill'd ;
 Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers, some in
 the death-spasm sweating ;
 An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders or calls ;
 The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the glint of the
 torches ;
 These I resume as I chant — I see again the forms, I smell the odor ;
 Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men, Fall in* ;
 But first I bend to the dying lad — his eyes open — a half-smile
 gives he me ;
 Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to the darkness,
 Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the ranks,
 The unknown road still marching.

AN ARMY CORPS ON THE MARCH

With its cloud of skirmishers in advance,
 With now the sound of a single shot, snapping like a whip, and now
 an irregular volley.
 The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on ;
 Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun — the dust-cover'd men,
 In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,
 With artillery interspers'd — the wheels rumble, the horses sweat,
 As the army corps advances.

OUT OF THE ROLLING OCEAN THE CROWD

Out of the rolling ocean the crowd came a drop gently to me,
 Whispering *I love you, before long I die,*
I have travel'd a long way merely to look on you to touch you,

*For I could not die till I once look'd on you,
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.*

Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe,
Return in peace to the ocean my love,
I too am part of that ocean my love, we are not so much separated,
Behold the great rondure, the cohesion of all, how perfect!
But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate us,
As for an hour carrying us diverse, yet cannot carry us diverse forever;
Be not impatient — a little space — know you I salute the air
the ocean and the land,
Every day at sundown for your dear sake my love.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and
measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much
applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths — for you the shores
a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You 've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

I

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
 And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
 I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.
 Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
 Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
 And thought of him I love.

II

O powerful western fallen star!
 O shades of night — O moody, tearful night!
 O great star disappear'd — O the black murk that hides the star!
 O cruel hands that hold me powerless — O helpless soul of me!
 O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

III

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
 Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
 With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
 With every leaf a miracle — and from this bush in the dooryard,
 With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
 A sprig with its flower I break.

IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
 A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
 The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
 Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
 Death's outlet song of life (for well dear brother I know,
 If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

V

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
 Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd
 from the ground, spotting the gray débris,
 Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the
 endless grass,
 Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in
 the dark-brown fields uprisen,
 Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
 Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
 Night and day journeys a coffin.

VI

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
 Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
 With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
 With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women
 standing,
 With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
 With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the
 unbare heads,
 With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
 With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising
 strong and solemn,
 With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
 The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs — where amid
 these you journey,
 With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
 Here, coffin that slowly passes,
 I give you my sprig of lilac.

VII

(Nor for you, for one alone,
 Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
 For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O sane
 and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
 O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
 But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
 Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
 With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
 For you and the coffins all of you O death)

VIII

O western orb sailing the heaven,
 Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
 As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
 As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after
 night,
 As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side (while the
 other stars all look'd on),
 As we wander'd together the solemn night (for something I know
 not what kept me from sleep),
 As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full
 you were of woe,
 As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent
 night,
 As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black
 of the night,
 As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
 Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

IX

Sing on there in the swamp,
 O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
 I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
 But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
 The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

X

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
 And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
 And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
 Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till
 there on the prairies meeting,
 These and with these and the breath of my chant,
 I 'll perfume the grave of him I love.

XI

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
 And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
 To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
 With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid
 and bright,

With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
 With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
 In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
 With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
 And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
 And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

XII

Lo, body and soul — this land,
 My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
 The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light,
 Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
 And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
 The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
 The gentle soft-born measureless light,
 The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
 The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
 Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

XIII

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
 Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
 Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
 Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender !
 O wild and loose to my soul — O wondrous singer !
 You only I hear — yet the star holds me (but will soon depart),
 Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

XIV

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
 In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,

In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturb'd winds and the storms),
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbings throb'd, and the cities pent—low, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,*

And for love, sweet love — but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

XV

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles
I saw them,

And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
 And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence),
 And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
 And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
 I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
 But I saw they were not as was thought,
 They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
 The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
 And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
 And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

xvi

Passing the visions, passing the night,
 Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
 Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
 Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
 As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding
 the night,
 Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again
 bursting with joy,
 Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
 As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
 Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
 I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
 From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing
 with thee,
 O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
 The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
 And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
 With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of
 woe,
 With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
 Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep,
 for the dead I loved so well,
 For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands — and this
 for his dear sake,
 Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
 There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

RECONCILIATION

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
 Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be
 utterly lost,
 That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly
 wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
 For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
 I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin — I draw
 near,
 Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the
 coffin.

I HEARD YOU, SOLEMN-SWEET PIPES OF THE
ORGAN

I heard you, solemn-sweet pipes of the organ, as last Sunday morn
 I pass'd the church;
 Winds of autumn! — as I walk'd the woods at dusk, I heard your
 long-stretch'd sighs, up above, so mournful;
 I heard the perfect Italian tenor, singing at the opera — I heard
 the soprano in the midst of the quartet singing;
 . . . Heart of my love! — you too I heard, murmuring low, through
 one of the wrists around my head;
 Heard the pulse of you, when all was still, ringing little bells last
 night under my ear.

ABOARD AT A SHIP'S HELM

Aboard at a ship's helm,
 A young steersman steering with care.
 Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
 An ocean-bell — O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing,
 Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert O steersman, you mind the loud admonition,
 The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away under her
 gray sails,
 The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious wealth speeds
 away gayly and safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!
 Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.

THE RUNNER

On a flat road runs the well-train'd runner;
 He is lean and sinewy, with muscular legs;
 He is thinly clothed — he leans forward as he runs,
 With lightly closed fists, and arms partially rais'd.

ONE'S-SELF I SING

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
 Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
 Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse —
 I say the Form complete is worthier far,
 The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
 Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
 The Modern Man I sing.

TEARS

Tears! tears! tears!
 In the night, in solitude, tears,
 On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the sand,
 Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate,
 Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;
 O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?
 What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?
 Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild cries;
 O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along the
 beach!
 O wild and dismal night storm, with wind — O belching and
 desperate!
 O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm countenance
 and regulated pace,
 But away at night as you fly, none looking — O then the unloosen'd
 ocean,
 Of tears! tears! tears!

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT

On the beach at night,
 Stands a child with her father,
 Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
 While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading,
 Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
 Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
 Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
 And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
 Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
 Those burial-clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all,
 Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,
 Weep not, my darling,
 With these kisses let me remove your tears,
 The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
 They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only in
 apparition,
 Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the
 Pleiades shall emerge,
 They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall
 shine out again,
 The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they
 endure,
 The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons shall
 again shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for Jupiter?
 Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?
 Something there is,
 (With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
 I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection,)
 Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
 (Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away,)
 Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
 Longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
 Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

A noiseless patient spider,
 I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
 Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
 It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
 Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
 Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
 Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to
 connect them,
 Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
 Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

OF HIM I LOVE DAY AND NIGHT

Of him I love day and night, I dream'd I heard he was dead ;
 And I dream'd I went where they had buried him I love — but he
 was not in that place ;
 And I dream'd I wander'd, searching among burial-places, to find
 him ;
 And I found that every place was a burial-place ;
 The houses full of life were equally full of death, (this house is
 now ;)
 The streets, the shipping, the places of amusement, the Chicago,
 Boston, Philadelphia, the Mannahatta, were as full of the
 dead as of the living,
 And fuller, O vastly fuller, of the dead than of the living ;
 — And what I dream'd I will henceforth tell to every person and age,
 And I stand henceforth bound to what I dream'd ;
 And now I am willing to disregard burial-places, and dispense
 with them ;
 And if the memorials of the dead were put up indifferently every-
 where, even in the room where I eat or sleep, I should be
 satisfied ;
 And if the corpse of any one I love, or if my own corpse, be duly
 render'd to powder, and pour'd in the sea, I shall be satisfied ;
 Or if it be distributed to the winds, I shall be satisfied.

THE LAST INVOCATION

At the last, tenderly,
 From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
 From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed
 doors,
 Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth ;
 With the key of softness unlock the locks — with a whisper,
 Set ope the doors O soul.

Tenderly — be not impatient,
 (Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,
 Strong is your hold O love.)

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee),
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee.
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast).

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With reappearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also reappearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all wings),
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms
gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

THE OX-TAMER

In a far-away northern county in the placid pastoral region,
Lives my farmer friend, the theme of my recitative, a famous
tamer of oxen,
There they bring him the three-year-olds and the four-year-olds
to break them,
He will take the wildest steer in the world and break him and
tame him,
He will go fearless without any whip where the young bullock
chafes up and down the yard,
The bullock's head tosses restless high in the air with raging eyes,
Yet see you! how soon his rage subsides — how soon this tamer
tames him;
See you! on the farms hereabout a hundred oxen young and old,
and he is the man who has tamed them,
They all know him, all are affectionate to him;
See you! some are such beautiful animals, so lofty looking;
Some are buff-color'd, some mottled, one has a white line running
along his back, some are brindled,

Some have wide flaring horns (a good sign) — see you ! the bright hides,
 See, the two with stars on their foreheads — see, the round bodies
 and broad backs,
 How straight and square they stand on their legs — what fine
 sagacious eyes !
 How they watch their tamer — they wish him near them — how
 they turn to look after him !
 What yearning expression ! how uneasy they are when he moves
 away from them ;
 Now I marvel what it can be he appears to them (books, politics,
 poems, depart — all else departs),
 I confess I envy only his fascination — my silent, illiterate friend,
 Whom a hundred oxen love there in his life on farms,
 In the northern county far, in the placid pastoral region.

THE DALLIANCE OF THE EAGLES

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest),
 Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles,
 The rushing amorous contact high in space together,
 The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,
 Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,
 In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling,
 Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,
 A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,
 Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse
 flight,
 She hers, he his, pursuing.

AFTER THE SUPPER AND TALK

After the supper and talk — after the day is done,
 As a friend from friends his final withdrawal prolonging,
 Good-bye and Good-bye with emotional lips repeating,
 (So hard for his hand to release those hands — no more will they meet,
 No more for communion of sorrow and joy, of old and young,
 A far-stretching journey awaits him, to return no more,)
 Shunning, postponing severance — seeking to ward off the last
 word ever so little,
 E'en at the exit-door turning — charges superfluous calling back
 — e'en as he descends the steps,
 Something to eke out a minute additional — shadows of nightfall
 deepening,
 Farewells, messages lessening — dimmer the forthgoer's visage and
 form,
 Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness — loth, O so loth to depart !
 Garrulous to the very last.

GOOD-BYE MY FANCY!

Good-bye my Fancy!
 Farewell dear mate, dear love!
 I 'm going away, I know not where,
 Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
 So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last — let me look back a moment;
 The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
 Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
 Delightful! — now separation — Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
 Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended
 into one;
 Then if we die we die together (yes, we 'll remain one),
 If we go anywhere we 'll go together to meet what happens,
 May-be we 'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
 May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs,
 (who knows?)
 May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning — so
 now finally,
 Good-bye — and hail! my Fancy.

George Henry Boker [1823-1890]

SONNETS

I

Not when the buxom form which nature wears
 Is pregnant with the lusty warmth of Spring;
 Nor when hot Summer, sunk with what she bears,
 Lies panting in her flowery offering;
 Nor yet when dusty Autumn sadly fares
 In tattered garb, through which the shrewd winds sing,
 To bear her treasures to the griping snares
 Hard Winter set for the poor bankrupt thing;
 Not even when Winter, heir of all the year,
 Deals, like a miser, round his niggard board
 The brimming plenty of his luscious hoard;
 No, not in nature, change she howsoe'er,
 Can I find perfect type or worthy peer
 Of the fair maid in whom my heart is stored.

II

Either the sum of this sweet mutiny
 Amongst thy features argues me some harm ;
 Or else they practise wicked treachery
 Against themselves, thy heart, and hapless me.
 For as I start aside with blank alarm,
 Dreading the glitter which begins to arm
 Thy clouded brows, lo ! from thy lips I see
 A smile come stealing, like a loaded bee,
 Heavy with sweets and perfumes, all
 With soft reflections from the flowery wall
 Whereon it pauses. Yet I will not raise
 One question more, let smile or frown befall,
 Taxing thy love where I should only praise,
 And asking changes, that might change thee all.

III

I 'll call thy frown a headsman, passing grim,
 Walking before some wretch foredoomed to death,
 Who counts the pantings of his own hard breath ;
 Wondering how heart can beat, or steadfast limb
 Bear its sad burden to life's awful brim.
 I 'll call thy smile a priest, who slowly saith
 Soft words of comfort, as the sinner strayeth
 Away in thought ; or sings a holy hymn,
 Full of rich promise, as he walks behind
 The fatal axe with face of goodly cheer,
 And kind inclinations of his saintly ear.
 So, love, thou seest in smiles, or looks unkind,
 Some taste of sweet philosophy I find,
 That seasons all things in our little sphere.

IV

Love is that orbit of the restless soul
 Whose circle grazes the confines of space,
 Bounding within the limits of its race
 Utmost extremes ; whose high and topmost poll
 Within the very blaze of heaven doth roll ;
 Whose nether course is through the darkest place
 Eclipsed by hell. What daring hand shall trace
 The blended joys and sorrows that control
 A heart whose journeys the fixed hand of fate
 Points through this pathway ? Who may soar so high —
 Behold such glories with unwinking eye ?

Who drop so low beneath his mortal state,
 And thence return with careful chart and date,
 To mark which way another's course must lie?

V

Thou who dost smile upon me, yet unknown,
 Mayst have more cause if thou wilt draw more near.
 Now Summer's heat unbinds the golden zone
 Of virgin buds; then why should chilling fear
 Seal up thy heart, and leave thy love unblown,
 While Nature whispers in thy timid ear,
 "Now is the time"? For Summer's quickly flown,
 And Winter's frost rounds up the flying year.
 Lady, I pray thee, take unto thy heart
 The lesson mother Nature reads to thee;
 Nor act towards me a more ungentle part
 Than Summer acts towards every budding tree,
 That feels her influence through its being dart,
 As I would feel thy influence dart through me.

VI

Your love to me appears in doubtful signs,
 Vague words, shy looks, that never touch the heart;
 But to the brain a scanty hint impart
 As to whose side your dear regard inclines:
 Thence, forced by reason through the narrow lines
 That mark and limit the logician's art —
 Catching from thought to thought — my mind combines
 In one idea the mystic things you start,
 And coldly utters to my heart — that swells
 With tardy rapture — "It is thee she loves!"
 Alas! alas! that reason only proves
 A fact your cautious action never tells,
 That I must reach my joy by slow removes,
 And guess at love, as at the oracles.

VII

Here part we, love, beneath the world's broad eye,
 Yet heart to heart still answers as of old;
 And though fore'er within my breast I hold
 Thy image shut, and ne'er, by look nor sigh,
 Betray thy presence to the foes who lie
 Ambushed around us, do not deem me cold.
 For cowering Love's wide pinions only fold
 Closer, to shield him from the storm that's nigh, —

Closer, to warm the fresh and godlike form
 That glows with life beneath the shrinking wings.
 So my deep love around thee darkly flings
 This cloud of coldness, that, beneath it, warm
 As the snow-covered currents of the springs,
 Our hearts may beat, safe-sheltered from the storm.

VIII

My lady sighs, and I am far away ;
 My lady weeps, and I cannot be near
 To still the sigh, or catch the falling tear
 On lips whose office 't is to own her sway,
 And curl in scorn when other maidens play
 Their love-pranks round me. I am lost in fear,
 Haunted with doubts and shadows that appear
 To lengthen ever with declining day.
 All things seem dubious ; the rise and fall
 Of my own heart, the wild ideas that move
 Like phantoms through my brain, the faith above
 My intellectual grasp, do but appall
 By their dim aspects, and I doubt them all ; —
 All seem unreal, except alone thy love.

IX

In this deep hush and quiet of my soul,
 When life runs low, and all my senses stay
 Their daily riot ; when my wearied clay
 Resigns its functions, and, without control
 Of selfish passion, my essential whole
 Rises in purity, to make survey
 Of those poor deeds that wear my days away ;
 When in my ear I hear the distant toll
 Of bells that murmur of my coming knell,
 And all things seem a show and mockery —
 Life, and life's actions, noise and vanity ;
 I ask my mournful heart if it can tell
 If all be truth which I protest to thee :
 And my heart answers, solemnly, " 'T is well ! "

X

I have been mounted on life's topmost wave,
 Until my forehead kissed the dazzling cloud ;
 I have been dashed beneath the murky shroud
 That yawns between the watery crests. I rave,

Sometimes, liked cursed Orestes ; sometimes lave
 My limbs in dews of asphodel ; or, bowed
 With torrid heat, I moan to heaven aloud,
 Or shrink with Winter in his icy cave.

Now peace broods over me ; now savage rage
 Spurns me across the world. Nor am I free
 From nightly visions, when the pictured page
 Of sleep unfolds its varied leaves to me,
 Changing as often as the mimic stage ; —
 And all this, lady, through my love for thee !

xi

Sometimes, in bitter fancy, I bewail
 This spell of love, and wish the cause removed ;
 Wish I had never seen, or, seeing, not loved
 So utterly that passion should prevail
 O'er self-regard, and thoughts of thee assail
 Those inmost barriers which so long have proved
 Unconquerable, when such defence behoved.
 But, ah ! my treacherous heart doth ever fail
 To ratify the sentence of my mind ;
 For when conviction strikes me to the core,
 I swear I love thee fondlier than before ;
 And were I now all free and unconfined,
 Loose as the action of the shoreless wind,
 My slavish heart would sigh for bonds once more.

xii

What fancy, or what flight of wingèd thought,
 O lady of my heart, hast thou to chime
 Accordant with the flow of my poor rhyme ?
 Have my strange songs a dearer solace brought
 Than those remembered lays thy childhood caught,
 And treasured safely through disloyal time —
 Lays of a sweeter tongue and fairer clime ;
 Pure as thy dreams, before our passion sought
 And won the shadowy realm, and steeped thy sleep
 In fiery visions and terrific throes
 Of self-consuming love ? My songs are foes
 To peace and thee ; yet thou dost bid me sweep
 The torturing strings, although thy eyelids weep :
 Find'st thou a pleasure in thy very woes ?

XIII

All the world's malice, all the spite of fate,
Cannot undo the rapture of the past.
I, like a victor, hold these glories fast;
And here defy the envious powers, that wait
Upon the crumbling fortunes of our state,
To snatch this myrtle chaplet, or to blast
Its smallest leaf. Thus to the wind I cast
The poet's laurel, and before their date
Summon the direst terrors of my doom.
For, with this myrtle symbol of my love,
I reign exultant, and am fixed above
The petty fates that other joys consume.
As on a flowery path, through life I 'll move, —
As through an arch of triumph, pass the tomb.

XIV

Perhaps in mercy is the future masked.
For who so hardy, if his fate were read,
As to abide its coming? Ah, instead
Of cloudy hopes in which my heart has basked —
Dim lights, bright shadows, airy fancies, tasked
By schooling reason — I might lie half dead,
Groaning beneath a ruthless vision spread
By that hard knowledge I so rashly asked.
For if I saw my love's disastrous end
Now laid before my horror-stricken eyes —
That whole fair web of close inwoven ties
Torn and disjoined — I would no more contend
With fate, but fly it as the coward flies,
And at one blow, both love and being rend.

XV

As some new ghost, that wanders to and fro
By dreary Lethe, turns his vacant eyes,
Drowsy with recent death, to those dull skies,
And barren lands, and that black river's flow;
And finds, poor ghost, how strange and stranger grow
The wretched scene; till, stung with wild surprise,
His earthly memory lifts its piteous cries
For what it loved, but never more shall know.
Now thou art gone, so seems this empty place,
A darkness settles down o'er land and main,

A strangeness haunts the chambers of my brain ;
 Gone is the splendor of thy radiant face,
 No prayer can summon back its tender grace ;
 So I lie down, and strive to die again.

XVI

If dreaming of thee be a waste of time,
 My endless sin I can but frankly own ;
 For ere the foreward primroses had blown,
 Or woodbine had begun to bud and climb,
 While the scarred land was pinched with frosty rime,
 And laggard spring but here and there had shown
 Her quickening touch, within my heart had grown
 The ripened fruitage of this gentle crime.
 Through summer and through autumn rolled the year,
 The rose burst out and fell before my eye ;
 Another spring, another summer die,
 And yet my thralldom only doth appear
 Deeper and deeper on my heart to lie ;
 And all my life will pass in dreams, I fear.

XVII

When I look back upon my early days,
 In what a wilderness of love I spent
 My flower of life, and how I seized and bent
 Each proffered heart to suit my fickle ways ;
 How many tender buds were crushed, to raise
 The piteous incense of their virgin scent
 To the cruel nostrils and the cold intent
 Of that bad idol, Self, set up for praise :
 I can but shudder at the waste of sin
 In which my wicked hours were sometime passed
 And wonder that such bonds could hold me fast,
 Who now abhor the paths I wandered in
 With wanton Circe and her bestial kin ;
 I, safely, sheltered in thy heart at last.

XVIII

I strive to live my life in whitest truth,
 Even in the face of this deceitful world ;
 And if in errors I am caught and whirled
 From the fair courses of my candid youth,
 I view my trespasses with thoughtful ruth ;
 And the poor mummer's scornful lip is curled,
 And a low curse indignantly is hurled
 At arts which others blindly take as sooth.

But when I enter thy pure presence, Sweet,
I come as one into a holy shrine.
I taste the mystic wafer and the wine,
And fraud and falsehood from my heart retreat.
Through thy divinity I grow divine,
And my world's mask lies empty at thy feet.

XIX

Thus in her absence is my fancy cool :
And then my schemes of purity designed
Pass, in a vestal-train, across my mind,
And, for the hour, my equal pulses rule.
Alas ! alas ! I know I play the fool,
So self-deluded, though not wholly blind ;
For should her robe now flutter on the wind,
My blood would bubble like an Iceland pool.
Her sight would fire me, and her touch undo
A thousand oaths, whose vows I meant to heed,
And swore with honest heart and purpose true ;
But when my lips upon her lips should feed,
I would possess her, though hell yawned in view,
Ablaze to punish the presumptuous deed !

XX

Today her Majesty was wroth and cold,
Because I trifled when her heart was sad :
How in her arms could I be else than glad
To play the lamb within that rapturous fold ?
But what perverseness made me overbold
To show the manners of a rustic lad,
Boisterous and rude, with vulgar mirth run mad,
Within the solemn court she chose to hold ?
So on the rug her little foot she beat,
Shook on her brow her crown of braided hair,
Lifted her sceptered finger high in air,
Flashed in my face her eyes' consuming heat,
Made her dread presence terrible to bear ;
And I — ah ! I slid whimpering to her feet !

XXI

Death on his mission sought my lady's side ;
She turned her eyes, and caught him in their glance :
Something he felt beneath his grey ribs dance,
Unknown before, that curbed his chilly pride.
But when she spoke, unmarked the sands did glide

Through his dark glass, while on her utterance
 He hung supine, in a forgetful trance,
 And the red drops upon his scythe-blade dried.
 He stood unarmed; she smiled to see his plight;
 But Death, poor Death, could only grin and groan,
 Seeking for favor in my darling's sight.
 Then with a laugh she struck the goblin prone,
 And he crawled backward to his native night,
 Pierced with a wound more fatal than his own.

XXII

Love sat at ease upon Time's bony knee;
 Pulled his grey beard; paddled his finger-tips
 Among his wrinkles; smote his bloodless lips;
 With rosy palms, forbade his eyes to see;
 O'erturned his fatal hour-glass; wantonly
 Pulled his scythe-edge against that dart which rips
 The heart of adamant; cast gibes and quips
 Straight in his teeth, out-mocking mockery.
 What said the phantom? Nought; he only smiled
 To be thus toyed with; held his wasting breath,
 Lest he might do some damage to the child;
 Till Love, grown weary of that pastime, saith,
 "This is too tame; my heart with joy is wild;
 Come, Father, come! Let us go play with Death!"

FROM "THE BOOK OF THE DEAD"

I

The hopes, on which our spirits live,
 Are now completed truths to thee;
 Thy soul no longer can misgive
 The shaping of the last decree.

The end of prophecy is thine,
 The law that lies in seeming chance,
 And all the tangled schemes we twine
 Are simple to thy single glance.

The banded stars beneath thee spin;
 They cannot hide their secret power;
 Thou know'st the mystery within
 The blooming of the earliest flower.

From sphere to sphere thy soul ascends,
 Earth fades beneath her cleaving wings,

Till, gathering all creation's ends,
She broods above the crown of things.

Poised in thy grand eternity,
I question thee, majestic Soul ;
Has earth no more regard from thee
Than as an atom of the whole ?

Or like a man who, days and nights,
Has travelled, and at length is come
Above his city's myriad lights,
And only sees the light of home,

Art thou, thus gazing from afar ? —
And when thy clear perceptions part
The mingled systems from one star,
Comes there a tumult in thy heart ?

II

When I am turned to moulding dust,
And all my ways are lost in night,
When through me crocuses have thrust
Their pointed blades, to find the light ;

And caught by plant and grass and grain,
My elements are made a part
Of nature, and, through sun and rain,
Swings in a flower my wayward heart ;

Some curious mind may haply ask,
“Who penned this scrap of olden song ?
Paint us the man whose woful task
Frowns in the public eye so long.”

I answer, truly as I can ;
I hewed the wood, the water drew ;
I toiled along, a common man, —
A man, in all things, like to you.

III

I, sighing o'er the happy past,
Yet murmur for the time to come ;
And, like a shipwrecked voyager, cast
On land, above the flying foam,

Look, from my shelter, o'er the sea,
To catch the glimmer of a sail ;

And think my solitude to be
 Worse than their lot who, in the gale,
 Went down amidst the strangling wave; —
 Quick exit from the endless strife
 That I reluctantly must brave,
 To keep my body's wretched life.

I stand upon a barren shoal:
 The life that was seems passing fair:
 I stretch the vision of my soul,
 And fill the azure depths of air

With flashing crowns, and snowy wings,
 And saints, rejoicing as they meet,
 And the seraphic choir that sings
 Forever at God's quiet feet.

IV

If any good may come to me
 From the cruel thorns o'er which I tread, —
 Soft touches of humility,
 That bow to earth my chastened head;

I shall not thank the evil things,
 That served as Heaven's dumb instruments;
 Nor give their many wholesome stings
 The merit due to good intents.

Out of the vileness of their hearts,
 They hissed and stung: God's mercy stood
 Between us, and allayed the smarts,
 And from their evil wrought my good.

Henry Timrod [1829-1867]

A CRY TO ARMS

Ho! woodsmen of the mountain side!
 Ho! dwellers in the vales!
 Ho! ye who by the chafing tide
 Have roughened in the gales!
 Leave barn and byre, leave kin and cot,
 Lay by the bloodless spade;
 Let desk, and case, and counter rot,
 And burn your books of trade.

The despot roves your fairest lands ;
 And till he flies or fears,
 Your fields must grow but armèd bands,
 Your sheaves be sheaves of spears !
 Give up to mildew and to rust
 The useless tools of gain ;
 And feed your country's sacred dust
 With floods of crimson rain !

Come, with the weapons at your call —
 With musket, pike, or knife ;
 He wields the deadliest blade of all
 Who lightest holds his life.
 The arm that drives its unbought blows
 With all a patriot's scorn,
 Might brain a tyrant with a rose,
 Or stab him with a thorn.

Does any falter ? let him turn
 To some brave maiden's eyes,
 And catch the holy fires that burn
 In those sublunar skies.
 Oh ! could you like your women feel,
 And in their spirit march,
 A day might see your lines of steel
 Beneath the victor's arch.

What hope, O God ! would not grow warm
 When thoughts like these give cheer ?
 The Lily calmly braves the storm,
 And shall the Palm-tree fear ?
 No ! rather let its branches court
 The rack that sweeps the plain ;
 And from the Lily's regal port
 Learn how to breast the strain !

Ho ! woodsmen of the mountain side !
 Ho ! dwellers in the vales !
 Ho ! ye who by the roaring tide
 Have roughened in the gales !
 Come ! flocking gayly to the fight,
 From forest, hill, and lake ;
 We battle for our Country's right,
 And for the Lily's sake !

CHARLESTON

Calm as that second summer which precedes
The first fall of the snow,
In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds,
The City bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts stern and proud,
Her bolted thunders sleep —
Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,
Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scar
To guard the holy strand;
But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war
Above the level sand.

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched,
Unseen, beside the flood —
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched
That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with trade,
Walk grave and thoughtful men,
Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's blade
As lightly as the pen.

And maidens, with such eyes as would grow dim
Over a bleeding hound,
Seem each one to have caught the strength of him
Whose sword she sadly bound.

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home,
Day patient following day,
Old Charleston looks from roof, and spire, and dome,
Across her tranquil bay.

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon lands
And spicy Indian ports,
Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands,
And Summer to her courts.

But still, along yon dim Atlantic line,
The only hostile smoke
Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine,
From some frail, floating oak.

Shall the Spring dawn, and she still clad in smiles,
 And with an unscathed brow,
 Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned isles,
 As fair and free as now?

We know not; in the temple of the Fates
 God has inscribed her doom;
 And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits
 The triumph or the tomb.

THE UNKNOWN DEAD

The rain is plashing on my sill,
 But all the winds of Heaven are still;
 And so it falls with that dull sound
 Which thrills us in the church-yard ground,
 When the first spadeful drops like lead
 Upon the coffin of the dead.
 Beyond my streaming window-pane,
 I cannot see the neighboring vane,
 Yet from its old familiar tower
 The bell comes, muffled, through the shower.
 What strange and unsuspected link
 Of feeling touched, has made me think —
 While with a vacant soul and eye
 I watch that gray and stony sky —
 Of nameless graves on battle-plains
 Washed by a single winter's rains,
 Where, some beneath Virginian hills,
 And some by green Atlantic rills,
 Some by the waters of the West,
 A myriad unknown heroes rest.
 Ah! not the chiefs, who, dying, see
 Their flags in front of victory,
 Or, at their life-blood's noble cost
 Pay for a battle nobly lost,
 Claim from their monumental beds
 The bitterest tears a nation sheds.
 Beneath yon lonely mound — the spot
 By all save some fond few forgot —
 Lie the true martyrs of the fight
 Which strikes for freedom and for right.
 Of them, their patriot zeal and pride,
 The lofty faith that with them died,
 No grateful page shall farther tell
 Than that so many bravely fell;

And we can only dimly guess
 What worlds of all this world's distress,
 What utter woe, despair, and dearth,
 Their fate has brought to many a hearth.
 Just such a sky as this should weep
 Above them, always, where they sleep ;
 Yet, haply, at this very hour,
 Their graves are like a lover's bower ;
 And Nature's self, with eyes unwet,
 Oblivious of the crimson debt
 To which she owes her April grace,
 Laughs gayly o'er their burial-place.

CHRISTMAS

How grace this hallowed day ?
 Shall happy bells, from yonder ancient spire,
 Send their glad greetings to each Christmas fire
 Round which the children play ?

Alas ! for many a moon,
 That tongueless tower hath cleaved the Sabbath air,
 Mute as an obelisk of ice, aglare
 Beneath an Arctic noon.

Shame to the foes that drown
 Our psalms of worship with their impious drum,
 The sweetest chimes in all the land lie dumb
 In some far rustic town.

There, let us think, they keep,
 Of the dead Yules which here beside the sea
 They 've ushered in with old-world, English glee,
 Some echoes in their sleep.

How shall we grace the day ?
 With feast, and song, and dance, and antique sports,
 And shout of happy children in the courts,
 And tales of ghost and fay ?

Is there indeed a door,
 Where the old pastimes, with their lawful noise,
 And all the merry round of Christmas joys,
 Could enter as of yore ?

Would not some pallid face
 Look in upon the banquet, calling up
 Dread shapes of battles in the wassail cup,
 And trouble all the place ?

How could we bear the mirth,
 While some loved reveler of a year ago
 Keeps his mute Christmas now beneath the snow,
 In cold Virginian earth?

How shall we grace the day?
 Ah! let the thought that on this holy morn
 The Prince of Peace — the Prince of Peace was born,
 Employ us, while we pray!

Pray for the peace which long
 Hath left this tortured land, and haply now
 Holds its white court on some far mountain's brow,
 There hardly safe from wrong!

Let every sacred fane
 Call its sad votaries to the shrine of God,
 And, with the cloister and the tented sod,
 Join in one solemn strain!

With pomp of Roman form,
 With the grave ritual brought from England's shore,
 And with the simple faith which asks no more
 Than that the heart be warm!

He, who, till time shall cease,
 Will watch that earth, where once, not all in vain,
 He died to give us peace, may not disdain
 A prayer whose theme is — peace.

Perhaps ere yet the Spring
 Hath died into the Summer, over all
 The land, the peace of His vast love shall fall,
 Like some protecting wing.

Oh, ponder what it means!
 Oh, turn the rapturous thought in every way!
 Oh, give the vision and the fancy play,
 And shape the coming scenes!

Peace in the quiet dales,
 Made rankly fertile by the blood of men,
 Peace in the woodland, and the lonely glen,
 Peace in the peopled vales!

Peace in the crowded town,
 Peace in a thousand fields of waving grain,
 Peace in the highway and the flowery lane,
 Peace on the wind-swept down!

Peace on the farthest seas,
 Peace in our sheltered bays and ample streams,
 Peace wheresoe'er our starry garland gleams,
 And peace in every breeze !

Peace on the whirring marts,
 Peace where the scholar thinks, the hunter roams,
 Peace, God of Peace ! peace, peace, in all our homes,
 And peace in all our hearts !

ODE

SUNG ON THE OCCASION OF DECORATING THE GRAVES OF THE
 CONFEDERATE DEAD, AT MAGNOLIA CEMETERY,
 CHARLESTON, S. C., 1867

I

Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,
 Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause ;
 Though yet no marble column craves
 The pilgrim here to pause.

II

In seeds of laurel in the earth
 The blossom of your fame is blown,
 And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
 The shaft is in the stone !

III

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years
 Which keep in trust your storied tombs,
 Behold ! your sisters bring their tears,
 And these memorial blooms.

IV

Small tributes ! but your shades will smile
 More proudly on these wreaths to-day,
 Than when some cannon-moulded pile
 Shall overlook this bay.

V

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies !
 There is no holier spot of ground
 Than where defeated valor lies,
 By mourning beauty crowned !

Emily Dickinson [1830-1886]

SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST

Success is counted sweetest
 By those who ne'er succeed.
 To comprehend a nectar
 Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host
 Who took the flag to-day
 Can tell the definition,
 So clear, of victory,

As he, defeated, dying,
 On whose forbidden ear
 The distant strains of triumph
 Break, agonized and clear.

A WOUNDED DEER LEAPS HIGHEST

A wounded deer leaps highest,
 I 've heard the hunter tell ;
 'T is but the ecstasy of death,
 And then the brake is still.

The smitten rock that gushes,
 The trampled steel that springs :
 A cheek is always redder
 Just where the hectic stings !

Mirth is the mail of anguish,
 In which it cautious arm,
 Lest anybody spy the blood
 And "You 're hurt" exclaim !

THE HEART ASKS PLEASURE FIRST

The heart asks pleasure first,
 And then, excuse from pain ;
 And then, those little anodynes
 That deaden suffering ;

And then, to go to sleep ;
 And then, if it should be
 The will of its Inquisitor,
 The liberty to die.

THE SOUL SELECTS HER OWN SOCIETY

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I 've known her from an ample nation
Choose one,
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

TO FIGHT ALOUD IS VERY BRAVE

To fight aloud is very brave,
But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom,
The cavalry of woe.

Who win, and nations do not see,
Who fall, and none observe,
Whose dying eyes no country
Regards with patriot love.

We trust, in plumed procession,
For such the angels go,
Rank after rank, with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

I TASTE A LIQUOR NEVER BREWED

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,

When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more !

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun !

I LIKE TO SEE IT LAP THE MILES

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks ;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads ;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza ;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges ;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop — docile and omnipotent —
At its own stable door.

HOPE IS A SUBTLE GLUTTON

Hope is a subtle glutton ;
He feeds upon the fair ;
And yet, inspected closely,
What abstinence is there !

His is the halcyon table
That never seats but one,
And whatsoever is consumed
The same amounts remain.

I FELT A CLEAVAGE IN MY MIND

I felt a cleavage in my mind
As if my brain had split ;
I tried to match it, seam by seam,
But could not make them fit.

The thought behind I strove to join
 Unto the thought before,
 But sequence ravelled out of reach
 Like balls upon a floor.

AT HALF-PAST THREE A SINGLE BIRD

At half-past three a single bird
 Unto a silent sky
 Propounded but a single term
 Of cautious melody.

At half-past four, experiment
 Had subjugated test,
 And lo ! her silver principle
 Supplanted all the rest.

At half-past seven, element
 Nor implement was seen,
 And place was where the presence was,
 Circumference between.

A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK

A bird came down the walk :
 He did not know I saw ;
 He bit an angle-worm in halves
 And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
 From a convenient grass,
 And then hopped sidewise to the wall
 To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
 That hurried all abroad, —
 They looked like frightened beads, I thought
 He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger ; cautious,
 I offered him a crumb,
 And he unrolled his feathers
 And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
 Too silver for a seam,
 Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
 Leap, splashless, as they swim.

PRESENTIMENT

Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn
Indicative that suns go down ;
The notice to the startled grass
That darkness is about to pass.

A NARROW FELLOW IN THE GRASS

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides ;
You may have met him, — did you not ?
His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen ;
And then it closes at your feet
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,
A floor too cool for corn.
Yet when a child, and barefoot,
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash
Unbraiding in the sun, —
When, stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me ;
I feel for them a transport
Of cordiality ;

But never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone.

I'LL TELL YOU HOW THE SUN ROSE

I 'll tell you how the sun rose, —
A ribbon at a time.
The steeples swam in amethyst,
The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,
The bobolinks begun.

Then I said softly to myself,
"That must have been the sun!"

• • • • •
But how he set, I know not.
There seemed a purple stile
Which little yellow boys and girls
Were climbing all the while

Till when they reached the other side,
A dominie in gray
Put gently up the evening bars,
And led the flock away.

ELYSIUM IS AS FAR AS TO

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door!

IF YOU WERE COMING IN THE FALL

If you were coming in the fall,
I'd brush the summer by
With half a smile and half a spurn,
As housewives do a fly.

If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls,
And put them each in separate drawers,
Until their time befalls.

If only centuries delayed,
I'd count them on my hand,
Subtracting till my fingers dropped
Into Van Diemen's land.

If certain, when this life was out,
That yours and mine should be,
I'd toss it yonder like a rind,
And taste eternity.

But now, all ignorant of the length
 Of time's uncertain wing,
 It goads me, like the goblin bee,
 That will not state its sting.

SHE ROSE TO HIS REQUIREMENT

She rose to his requirement, dropped
 The playthings of her life
 To take the honorable work
 Of woman and of wife.

If aught she missed in her new day
 Of amplitude, or awe,
 Or first prospective, or the gold
 In using wore away,

It lay unmentioned, as the sea
 Develops pearl and weed,
 But only to himself is known
 The fathoms they abide.

THE WAY I READ A LETTER'S THIS

The way I read a letter 's this :
 'Tis first I lock the door,
 And push it with my fingers next,
 For transport it be sure.

And then I go the furthest off
 To counteract a knock ;
 Then draw my little letter forth
 And softly pick its lock.

Then, glancing narrow at the wall,
 And narrow at the floor,
 For firm conviction of a mouse
 Not exorcised before,

Peruse how infinite I am
 To — no one that you know !
 And sigh for lack of heaven, — but not
 The heaven the creeds bestow.

I DIED FOR BEAUTY

I died for beauty, but was scarce
 Adjusted in the tomb,
 When one who died for truth was lain
 In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
 "For beauty," I replied.
 "And I for truth,— the two are one;
 We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
 We talked between the rooms,
 Until the moss had reached our lips,
 And covered up our names.

I'VE SEEN A DYING EYE

I 've seen a dying eye
 Run round and round a room
 In search of something, as it seemed,
 Then cloudier become;

And then, obscure with fog,
 And then be soldered down,
 Without disclosing what it be,
 'T were blessed to have seen.

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

Because I could not stop for Death,
 He kindly stopped for me;
 The carriage held but just ourselves
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
 And I had put away
 My labor, and my leisure too,
 For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
 At wrestling in a ring;
 We passed the fields of gazing grain,
 We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
 A swelling of the ground;

The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries ; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS

After a hundred years
Nobody knows the place, —
Agony, that enacted there,
Motionless as peace.

Weeds triumphant ranged,
Strangers strolled and spelled
At the lone orthography
Of the elder dead.

Winds of summer fields
Recollect the way, —
Instinct picking up the key
Dropped by memory.

I FELT A FUNERAL IN MY BRAIN

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners, to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated,
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead, again.
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

I HEARD A FLY BUZZ WHEN I DIED

I heard a fly buzz when I died ;
The stillness round my form
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heaves of storm.

The eyes beside had wrung them dry,
And breaths were gathering sure
For that last onset, when the king
Be witnessed in his power.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
What portion of me I
Could make assignable, — and then
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
Between the light and me ;
And then the windows failed, and then
I could not see to see.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DESPAIR

The difference between despair
And fear, is like the one
Between the instant of a wreck,
And when the wreck has been.

The mind is smooth, — no motion —
Contented as the eye
Upon the forehead of a Bust,
That knows it cannot see.

SHE DEALT HER PRETTY WORDS
LIKE BLADES

She dealt her pretty words like blades,
As glittering they shone,
And every one unbared a nerve
Or wantoned with a bone.

She never deemed she hurt,
That is not steel's affair ;
A vulgar grimace in the flesh
How ill the creatures bear !

To ache is human, not polite;
The film upon the eye
Mortality's old custom —
Just locking up to die.

I SHOULD NOT DARE TO BE SO SAD

I should not dare to be so sad
So many years again;
A load is first impossible
When we have put it down.

The Superhuman then withdraws,
And we who never saw
The Giant at the other side
Begin to perish now.

I HAD NOT MINDED WALLS

I had not minded walls
Were Universe one rock,
And far I heard his silver call
The other side the block.

I 'd tunnel until my groove
Pushed sudden through to his,
Then my face take recompense —
The looking in his eyes.

But 't is a single hair,
A filament, a law —
A cobweb wove in adamant,
A battlement of straw —

A limit like the veil
Unto the lady's face,
But every mesh a citadel
And dragons in the crease !

AFTER GREAT PAIN A FORMAL FEELING COMES

After great pain a formal feeling comes —
The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
The stiff Heart questions — was it He that bore?
And yesterday — or centuries before?

The feet mechanical
Go round a wooden way
Of ground or air or Ought, regardless grown,
A quartz contentment like a stone.

This is the hour of lead
Remembered if outlived,
As freezing persons recollect the snow —
First chill, then stupor, then the letting go.

I GOT SO I COULD HEAR HIS NAME

I got so I could hear his name
Without —
Tremendous gain! —
That stop-sensation in my soul,
And thunder in the room.

I got so I could walk across
That angle in the floor
Where he turned — so — and I turned how —
And all our sinew tore.

I got so I could stir the box
In which his letters grew —
Without that forcing in my breath
As staples driven through.

Could dimly recollect a Grace —
I think they called it “God,”
Renowned to ease extremity
When formula had failed —

And shape my hands petition’s way —
Tho’ ignorant of word
That Ordination utters —
My business with the cloud.

If any Power behind it be
Not subject to despair,
To care in some remoter way
For so minute affair
As misery —
Itself too vast for interrupting more,
Supreme than —
Superior to —

Sidney Lanier [1842-1881]

NIGHT AND DAY

The innocent, sweet Day is dead.
 Dark Night hath slain her in her bed.
 O, Moors are as fierce to kill as to wed!
 — Put out the light, said he.

A sweeter light than ever rayed
 From star of heaven or eye of maid
 Has vanished in the unknown Shade.
 — She's dead, she's dead, said he.

Now, in a wild, sad after-mood
 The tawny Night sits still to brood
 Upon the dawn-time when he wooed.
 — I would she lived, said he.

Star-memories of happier times,
 Of loving deeds and lovers' rhymes,
 Throng forth in silvery pantomimes.
 — Come back, O Day! said he.

SONG FOR 'THE JACQUERIE'

The hound was cuffed, the hound was kicked,
 O' the ears was cropped, o' the tail was nicked,
 (All.) Oo-hoo-o, howled the hound.
 The hound into his kennel crept;
 He rarely wept, he never slept.
 His mouth he always open kept
 Licking his bitter wound,
 The hound,
 (All.) U-lu-lo, howled the hound.

A star upon his kennel shone
 That showed the hound a meat-bare bone.
 (All.) O hungry was the hound!
 The hound had but a churlish wit.
 He seized the bone, he crunched, he bit.
 'An thou wert Master, I had slit
 Thy throat with a huge wound,'
 Quo' hound,
 (All.) O, angry was the hound.

The star in castle-window shone,
The Master lay abed, alone.

(All.) Oh ho, why not? quo' hound.
He leapt, he seized the throat, he tore
The Master, head from neck, to floor,
And rolled the head i' the kennel door,
And fled and salved his wound,

Good hound!

(All.) U-lu-lo, *howled the hound.*

EVENING SONG

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'T is done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands.
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart
Never our lips, our hands.

THE WAVING OF THE CORN

Ploughman, whose gnarly hand yet kindly wheeled
Thy plough to ring this solitary tree
With clover, whose round plat, reserved a-field,
In cool green radius twice my length may be —
Scanting the corn thy furrows else might yield,
To pleasure August, bees, fair thoughts, and me,
That here come oft together — daily I,
Stretched prone in summer's mortal ecstasy,
Do stir with thanks to thee, as stirs this morn
With waving of the corn.

Unseen, the farmer's boy from round the hill
Whistles a snatch that seeks his soul unsought,
And fills some time with tune, howbeit shrill;
The cricket tells straight on his simple thought —
Nay, 't is the cricket's way of being still;

The peddler bee drones in, and gossips naught;
 Far down the wood, a one-desiring dove
 Times me the beating of the heart of love:
 And these be all the sounds that mix, each morn,
 With waving of the corn.

From here to where the louder passions dwell,
 Green leagues of hilly separation roll:
 Trade ends where yon far clover ridges swell.
 Ye terrible Towns, ne'er claim the trembling soul
 That, craftless all to buy or hoard or sell,
 From out your deadly complex quarrel stole
 To company with large amiable trees,
 Suck honey summer with unjealous bees,
 And take Time's strokes as softly as this morn
 Takes waving of the corn.

THE STIRRUP-CUP

Death, thou 'rt a cordial old and rare:
 Look how compounded, with what care!
 Time got his wrinkles reaping thee
 Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went,
 Keats, and Gotama excellent,
 Omar Khayyám, and Chaucer bright,
 And Shakspere for a king-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:
 Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;
 'T is thy rich stirrup-cup to me;
 I'll drink it down right smilingly.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Out of the hills of Habersham,
 Down the valleys of Hall,
 I hurry amain to reach the plain,
 Run the rapid and leap the fall,
 Split at the rock and together again,
 Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
 And flee from folly on every side
 With a lover's pain to attain the plain
 Far from the hills of Habersham,
 Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
 All through the valleys of Hall,
 The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
 The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
 The laving laurel turned my tide,
 The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
 The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
 And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
 Veiling the valleys of Hall,
 The hickory told me manifold
 Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
 Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
 The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
 Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
 Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
 And oft in the valleys of Hall,
 The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
 Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
 And many a luminous jewel lone
 — Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
 Ruby, garnet and amethyst —
 Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
 In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
 In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
 And oh, not the valleys of Hall
 Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
 Downward the voices of Duty call —
 Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
 The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
 And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
 And the lordly main from beyond the plain
 Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
 Calls through the valleys of Hall.

MARSH SONG — AT SUNSET

Over the monstrous shambling sea,
 Over the Caliban sea,
 Bright Ariel-cloud, thou lingerest :
 Oh wait, oh wait, in the warm red West, —
 Thy Prospero I 'll be.

Over the humped and fishy sea,
 Over the Caliban sea
 O cloud in the West, like a thought in the heart
 Of pardon, loose thy wing, and start,
 And do a grace for me.

Over the huge and huddling sea,
 Over the Caliban sea,
 Bring hither my brother Antonio, — Man, —
 My injurer : night breaks the ban :
 Brother, I pardon thee.

George Edward Woodberry [1855-1930]

IDEAL PASSION

I

My lady ne'er hath given herself to me
 In mortal ways, nor on my eyes to hold
 Her image ; in a flying marble fold
 Of Hellas once I saw eternity
 Flutter about her form ; all nature she
 Inspirits, but round her being there is rolled
 The inextinguishable beauty old
 Of the far-shining mountains and the sea.

Now all my manhood doth enrich her shrine,
 Where first the young boy stored all hope, all fear.
 Fortune and fame and love be never mine,
 Since, seeking those, to her I were less dear !
 Albeit she hides herself in the divine,
 Always and everywhere I feel her near.

II

She is not cold, as mortal maidens are ;
 She is as vital as the universe,
 Like those great powers antiquity did nurse
 Upon the breast of being, names that star

The dusky dawn of passion, when the war
 Of the created rose above the curse,
 And throned for aye the better o'er the worse, —
 Astarte's, Aphrodite's avatar, —

The procreant beauty of love marvellous,
 Sister of Ceres and of Semele,
 The mighty mothers; I have seen her thus,
 Drawing Sicilian children to her knee,
 While cypress and rose-laurel ominous
 Burned in the noon beside the barren sea.

III

She is not holy like the Virgin One,
 The miracle of nature, simple, mild,
 The mother sanctified above the child,
 With rapt gaze turned forever on her Son,
 In whom the world's salvation was begun;
 Deep in His eyes creation undefiled
 Rose like a star; whereat my lady smiled,
 Before whom heavenly love doth herald run.

Her children are world prophecies to be
 Far off ensouled in life mysterious;
 Tremendous births, beyond the ecstasy
 Of nature's ordination over us;
 Immanent in the spiritual sea
 Their beauty, and their godhead glorious.

IV

She doth not leave me comfortless, nor e'er
 Of other lovers envious do I go,
 Who knew their ladies in the life below
 And after mourned them, whence the frequent stir
 Of what hath been doth sadly minister
 Images of what they no more shall know;
 She, unremembered, is more heavenly so;
 And more imperishably unto her
 My thoughts mount up, free from all earthly sense,
 Regrets, and grief-changed joys, if any joy,
 Vain recollections of love's impotence,
 And blots that our vexed life below annoy;
 My thoughts still meet her in pure innocence,
 And manhood but repeats the virgin boy.

V

I bear the lyre, and marry voice and song
 Upon the hills, the valley, and the plain,
 And in Apollo's bosom have I lain ;
 Wherefore I, too, unto that band belong,
 Whose momentary music echoes long,
 And like a brook doth to its stones complain ;
 I am acquainted with a lover's pain,
 And circumstance, and injury, and wrong.

Lo, the felicity I witness of !
 Dante and Petrarch all unenvied go
 From star to star, upward, all heavens above,
 The grave forgot, forgot the eternal woe ;
 Though glorified, their love was human love,
 One unto one : a greater love I know.

VI

How many human loves swarm to my arms,
 Although I am unworthy ! yet, in truth,
 I was a lover from my earliest youth,
 And love, even the unworthiest, hath dear charms ;
 And oft I feel within me vague alarms,
 Thick-thronging fears, and inward-turning ruth
 Lest my affections be not things of sooth,
 But phantom-fancies that oft end in harms.

Yet, though I seem unto the outward sense
 The veriest chameleon of love,
 That takes its colors from its ambience,
 And on the sweet herb that it pastures of,
 Transformed unto its nature, glows intense,
 These lower loves mirror the love above.

VII

Although I transmigrate from friend to friend,
 Yet do I own an undivided soul ;
 From form to form created things must roll,
 And of their transformation is no end ;
 But in my substance do I never bend ;
 Still unity my being doth control,
 And still I give myself entire and whole
 In all my loves, and with my object blend.

I cannot understand this mystery
 That so my changeless soul doth multiply ;

As many waves as rise upon the sea,
 So many motions in me shoreward fly,
 Wherever in this world's immensity
 I find a heart to break on, and to die.

VIII

All earthly loves to me are of the earth ;
 But not for that are they to me less sweet,
 Although I hold within my soul conceit
 Of higher things that have a heavenly worth.
 In my mortality I take my mirth,
 And crown my head with roses, with swift feet
 Run in the race-course, and in song compete
 With others, and have joys of home and hearth.

For if in exile I should disappear,
 And my true friends I never more might see,
 Never to love, never to hold them dear,
 Save in thought only, happier would they be
 Of my light joys, though poorer, there to hear ;
 Even so my lady hath no jealousy.

IX

And though my soul mix with the fatal ways
 Of nature passioning unto her end,
 And of her element I make my friend,
 Till loftier heavens shall amend my days,
 My lady mindeth not : so my own gaze
 Lower than man's creation doth descend
 The round of being, where myriads aye ascend
 Through nature to the super-solar blaze.

And if she see the lily overblown
 And all its pure gold scattered to the wind,
 And many a lover in his wars o'erthrown,
 She strives not nature's being to unbind ;
 Eternally to her still climb her own :
 Spirit through nature is but more refined.

X

I truly wonder what they mean by sin,
 The blest, who in the tabernacle pray ;
 I have not found it on my spiritual way,
 The soul's contagion, the black spot within,

Unto annihilating death akin,
 That mines with preternatural decay,
 And eats the substance of the soul away, —
 The soul, in which true being doth begin.

Although I bear all sorrows of the globe
 Through love and pity, and them feel and see,
 And all things search, and in myself most probe,
 I find it not in others nor in me ;
 With such pure elements did nature robe
 My substance, and my senses cleanse and free.

XI

Yet often have I wandered from the good,
 Grieved my own heart, and marred the beautiful
 In action, and transgressed love's golden rule,
 And on the wrong side of the battle stood ;
 Nor seldom have I, even as fancy would,
 Of others' lives and fortunes made my tool,
 And with my reputation played the fool,
 And drunk, and diced, and shown my hardihood.

Ah, then my braggart youth was outward-bound,
 And the fair morn a chime of winds and waves ;
 Full swelled my canvas ; the unknown, unfound, —
 The inexperienced world my spirit craves,
 Called me forever, like a trumpet's sound,
 And far adventurers in their ocean-graves.

XII

Ay, from the first my soul was outward-bound,
 And in my eyes was set their sailor-gaze
 Haunting the distance ; all my nursing Mays
 Broke into blossom to the breakers' sound ;
 Scarce-budded, from the sweet paternal ground
 Was I drawn forth to wandering nights and days,
 Early despairs, swift ripenings, quick decays,
 And all that in youth's chrysalis is found.

And, yet a boy, I sailed the seas of thought,
 And o'er the vague of passion darkly went,
 Adventuring all things for the thing I sought,
 The true, the fair, the dear, the excellent ;
 And, trying all things, home I nothing brought,
 Till love unto my side grew eloquent.

XIII

Love bathed my soul in the electric flame
 That doth with him most intimacy hold ;
 Love wrapped around me, fiery fold on fold,
 The poets' mantles of immortal fame ;
 Love poesied in my bosom, and went and came,
 And of ideal beauty most he told,
 Whereby eternal power cast in one mould
 Our being and nature's universal frame.

Love opened to me the deep infinite,
 Sphere beyond sphere, seas after rolling seas ;
 Where swam the world, my soul companioned it,
 And in its comprehension was my peace ;
 On the eternal vague did, brooding, sit,
 And from creation knew not how to cease.

XIV

Upon the everlasting element
 My soul advanced its intellectual ray,
 And far before that spiritual day
 The world-wide majesty of nature bent,
 Rejoicing in the beam that o'er it went
 And summoned forth its being from the gray,
 Infinite deep, showering new dawns as spray, —
 Its sphere my mind, my mind its continent.

But the delighted soul that there surveyed
 Its shoreless being and rich sovereignty,
 Whereto all things that are, are subject made,
 Drew back alarmed before that silent sea :
 Of my own solitude was I afraid,
 And the infinitude of fate to be.

XV

Full gently then Love laid me on his breast,
 And kissed me, cheek and hands and lips and brow,
 So sweetly that I do remember now
 The wonder of it, and the unexpressed,
 Infinite honor wherewith his eyes caressed
 Youth in my soul, then ripening to the vow
 That binds us ; and he said to me : "Sleep, thou ;
 One comes who brings to thee eternal rest."

I know not how in that dread interval
 My lady did herself to me make known,

So deep a slumber did upon me fall;
 I woke to know her being in my own,
 The nameless mystery whereon I call
 When every hope hath from my bosom flown.

XVI

She is not a pale visionary thing;
 She cometh not to me in dream or trance,
 Nor ever with phantasmal feature haunts
 The passages where thought goes wandering
 Its shadow-world; night's sky-embracing wing,
 That in the sleepy vault all things enchant,
 Captures not there her form and countenance;
 Fancies of her to me no fevers bring.

But when my conscious spirit doth purest ride
 In its full being and sentiency of life,
 When reason standeth at her height of pride,
 And my quick mind, with germination rife,
 Creates, then most in love do I abide,
 And nought but her seems real in that love-strife.

XVII

I understand the roseate mystery
 Of maiden-bridals in the Bridegroom's arms,
 That on celestial sighs spread forth their charms,
 And in devotion yield virginity;
 The amorous nun, richer in chastity,
 The more love round her with his motions swarms,
 Dissolves, as if the rose her bosom warms
 Only the spirit of the rose should be.

She gives herself unto her spiritual lord
 In ecstasy that doth all flesh consume;
 Her soul, incorporate in the Heavenly Word,
 Already leaves her body in the tomb;
 So sweetly, holily, have I been stirred,
 Not uncompanioned in the vacant room.

XVIII

And they who tell me of the nightingale
 That sings unto the rose, tell nothing new.
 Bloom, happy roses, spread out to the view
 Your bosoms to the never-ending tale!

Encriimson all the gardens, through the vale
 Scatter your fragrance on the melting blue!
 Sing, happy nightingales, forever true!
 Warble your love ere yet the thick notes fail!

Pour, Persian boy! and with wine fill the cup,
 And still the cup refill ere the guest goes!
 Time, that fleets fast, soon drinks the last draught up,
 The wine, the page, the nightingale, the rose!
 Last in the Sun's inn shall the poet sup,
 Who, sole, the vine's mysterious gladness knows!

XIX

O Sacred Love, and thou, O Love Profane,
 Great branches issuing from the viny stock
 Fast-rooted in earth's old primeval rock,
 Single your nature is, though seeming twain.
 The must of life is all one crimson stain
 Of vintage, there all generations flock;
 The rosy trampling feet let no saint mock,
 The cup divine no reveller disdain!

True love repeals all codes that have defined
 Higher and lower in its ministry;
 True love hath no diversity of kind,
 And undivided must its nature be;
 Earthly or heavenly, my soul divined,
 Only through passion cometh purity.

XX

Oh, could we know with disencumbered eyes
 The spirit's consubstantiality
 That only maketh men truly to be
 Mankind, and to the angels them allies,
 Seeing how love their being magnifies
 And of those pure affections makes them free,
 Whose rosy region is eternity,—
 What heavenly argosies would crowd our skies!

We should encounter, then, on every gale
 Mighty emotions that our breasts now pen;
 Ethereal fleets forever setting sail,
 Visions of youth, we should behold again;
 And shining on the world's horizon hail
 The congregation of the hopes of men.

XXI

Well from the first I knew how long deferred
 My rapture, unaccomplished here below ;
 Yet must I upon all the winds that blow
 Speak to all creatures my adoring word,
 So burning in my bosom's depth was stirred
 The power of loving ; loving must I go,
 Though crowning of desire I shall not know,
 A soul enamored, of the people heard.

All of my lady is this spreading fire,
 And mystical the quality thereof,
 That, parted farthest, unto her goes nigher,
 And seeming most to stoop, most springs above,
 And borne in heaven, unquenchable desire,
 Lights upon earth a thousand flames of love.

XXII

“Fear not to be alone,” my lady said,
 “Nor care thy heart to centre and confine
 On any mortal thing ; but be it thine
 Alike on good and evil still to shed,
 Sunlike, thy nature ; so the fountain-head
 Of all that is, doth unto each assign
 Some portion of the element divine
 That liveth, and abroad its glory spread.

“Love that toward thee its answering motion takes,
 A thousand-fold shall thy life-current heap,
 Whereof already prescience in thee wakes ;
 A river of the world, that flood shall sweep
 With many voices on ; full-banked, it makes
 Out, far out, to the unimagined deep.”

XXIII

“Love purifies his acts,” my lady said,
 “As first Apollo in his Castaly
 His votaries dipped, and in thy turn dipped thee,
 And healed thee of thy wounds of hardihead,
 Whom great desires into great perils led
 And made thee bonds even of thy liberty ;
 True service of the god, what'er it be,
 Doth in the action heavenly pardon shed.

“Only great sorrows can him greatly bless
 Who shall from great ideals his nature draw ;

Who doth no other lord than love confess,
 And aye shall own not any other law,
 Great raptures shall be his, and great distress,
 And innocence whereof the world hath awe.”

XXIV

Who hath not kissed the rose’s tender leaf,
 And sighed to think how easy ’t is to show
 To silent things of beauty the heart’s woe,
 And soothe with loveliness the spirit’s grief?
 How many an Attic stele’s fair bas-relief,
 That only now in memory I know,
 Has helped me to renounce and to forego!
 Of beauty’s favors to me this is chief.

When nighest to perfection I have trod,
 In art’s still dream or where earth’s roses burn,
 But most where human souls at Hermes’ rod
 Turn marble-pure, life’s deepest truth I learn,—
 From the child’s kiss, the grave’s late-turnéd sod,—
 Love is most sweet that looks for no return.

XXV

I never muse upon my lady’s grace,
 Nor dream upon her bounty, what may be
 Largess or guerdon at the last to me,
 Who serve far off and in a lowly place.
 I was not fashioned of the suitor-race
 Who give their labor and their hearts for fee;
 No recompense of my fidelity
 I meditate, — not even to see her face.

Only always invisible tenderness,
 Hanging about me like a spiritual cloud,
 Holds me obscure, and undivulged doth bless
 My soul, and in this world doth strangely shroud;
 Whereof the meaning I but faintly guess,
 Save that it keeps me private in life’s crowd.

XXVI

In what a glorious substance did they dream
 Who first embodied immortality,
 And in warm marble gave this world to see
 The earthly art that lifts heaven-high its beam!

Of things that only to the spirit seem
 They wrought the eternal stuff of memory,
 And the invisible divinity
 That they so loved, did in their temples gleam.

I have no art to deify the stone,
 Nor genius, later born, to limn or paint ;
 No instrumental music do I own,
 Of choiring angel or ecstatic saint ;
 Best by its frailties here is true love known,
 That in the heavenly presence waxes faint.

XXVII

And they, the Ionians, whose first-born minds
 Ethereal bore the intellectual ray
 Of knowledge through this realm of night and day,
 Where the apparent the true motion blinds,
 And change forever into new change winds
 And melts in the great world's creative play, —
 What power was theirs nature to disarray,
 What sight that in the seen the unseen finds !

Creation hath a double garniture,
 Twice woven of invisibility ;
 Beauty and truth shall one another lure,
 And each to other aye resolvèd be ;
 So forms divine shall this sad light endure,
 And thought transcend the sphere perpetually.

XXVIII

“An evil thing is honor,” once of old
 The saddest of Italian shepherds sang,
 And on his mouth the immortal lyric sprang
 That through all ages pours the age of gold :
 “Not that the earth untilled her harvests rolled,
 The rose no thorn, the serpent had no fang,
 The sea no furrow, nowhere ever rang
 The battle, but that love was uncontrolled.”

The reminiscence of all lost desire
 That love-defrauded hearts dream on for aye,
 Hangs in the words, and rises from the lyre,
 Whose ecstasy fails not unto this day.
 O Song of Gold ! O all-consuming fire !
 Victorious flame ! O lover-hearted lay !

xxix

I know not what in other men may sleep
 Of lower forms, which nature knew to shape
 To higher, and from her primal slime escape
 To sea, and land, and heaven's aerial deep ;
 Nor with what stirrings their thick blood may leap
 Of ante-natal slaughter, brutish rape ;
 I own no kinship with the obscene ape ;
 No beast within my flesh his lair doth keep.

The memory of the rose-tree runs not back
 Through the dim transmutations of the rose ;
 Sphere over sphere, above the solar track,
 The round of heaven greatens as it goes ;
 So am I changed ; though the last change I lack,
 When over love itself oblivion flows.

xxx

Oh, how with brightness hath Love filled my way,
 And with his glory hath beset my road !
 It seemeth that to him alone I owed
 Dawn, and the sweet salvation of the day.
 Enlightenment upon my soul held sway,
 And all my faculties of man o'erflowed
 With inward light, that, unobservèd, showed
 The path, more brilliant than noon's burning ray.

I did not know it then, — that gift divine,
 The beam wherein my spirit walked secure ;
 I thought the clarity of nature mine,
 Which only in him shines, and doth endure ;
 The track of light behind me crystalline
 With truth eternal, he made bright and pure.

xxxi

From what a far antiquity, my soul,
 Thou drawest thy urn of light ! what other one
 Of royal seed — yea ! children of the sun —
 Doth so divinely feel his lineage roll
 From the full height of man ? the immortal scroll
 Of thy engendering doth from Plato run,
 Colonnos singing, Simois, Marathon !
 Into thy birth such secret glory stole.
 The kings of thought and lords of chivalry
 Knighted me in great ages long ago ;

From David's throne and lowly Galilee,
 And Siloa's brook, my noble titles flow ;
 Under thy banners, Love, devout and free,
 Storing all time, thy child, I come and go.

xxxii

Much in Bithynia I pondered on
 The last god-birth of dark antiquity,
 Antinoös, whose golden mystery
 The sunset was of old religion.
 There in the passing of a world he shone,
 And left, unmindful of the world to be,
 This marble youth to be his memory,
 Beautiful, lost in thought, when all was gone.

Olympus had exhaled into a dream,
 And nought was left to man save his own heart.
 How could he of himself more nobly deem
 Than to transmute his being into art?
 And how could human beauty brighter beam
 Than in its perfect flower to depart?

xxxiii

Why, Love, beneath the fields of asphodel
 Where youth lies buried, goest thou wandering,
 And like a rainbow droops thy irised wing
 Above the dead on whom sweet passion fell?
 There thy eternal incarnations dwell,
 There bends Narcissus o'er the beauteous spring ;
 There to the lovely soil doth Hyacinth cling.
 Ay me ! when young, I breathed the Ægean spell.

Once voyaged I — Europe, Asia on each hand —
 To the inaccessible, dim, holy main ;
 Beautiful Ida wooed me, misty, grand ;
 Scamander shouted music in my brain ;
 And in the darkness, in the Trojan land,
 I heard my horses champing golden grain.

xxxiv

O ecstasy of the remembering heart
 That makes of all time but one stretchèd day,
 And brings us forward on life's glorious way
 An hour or two before we shall depart !

And thus the whole world melts to timeless art,
 And we in the eternal moment stay ;
 That is accomplished for which all men pray,
 And blunted is the ever-fatal dart.

Among the flowering ruins of old time
 I played with beauty's fragments ; Death and Hope
 Upon the dizzy stone beheld me climb,
 And in the acanthus-mantled marble grope ;
 I only heard the dawn Memnonian chime
 'Mid the wild grasses and wild heliotrope.

XXXV

Rebukeful reason, what words fall from thee ?
 "What actor-art is thine to doff and don !
 Is God, then, an antique tradition ?
 In whose name dost thou pray, away from me ?"
 'T is true, steeped am I in idolatry,
 Poor poet, bodied of religion !
 It is the only food I feed upon.
 Drunken with God I must forever be.

'T is true ; each vintage yields me fellowship,
 That time has crushed from man's long-suffering race ;
 But most the name that blessed my childhood's lip
 Bears up my manhood to the throne of grace ;
 And though my bread in all men's tears I dip,
 I eat it in old Calvary's weeping-place.

XXXVI

Yet am I such that when the morning breaks,
 I leave my garden of Gethsemane,
 And often will some god companion me
 Who from another heaven his lineage takes ;
 And on the road such sweet discourse he makes
 As fills the world anew with deity ;
 With other eyes all former sights I see,
 And in my soul the beautiful awakes.

So move I on, compassed with forms of grace
 Who greet me youngest of the heavenly line,
 For that strange light that aye shines in my face
 From her I love in secret, makes them mine,
 And they adopt me into their high race,
 Who only through my lady walk divine.

XXXVII

Between my eyes and her so thin the screen
Grows with the passage of my mortal years
That almost to my human sight appears
The holy presence of the life serene.
The skies of Perugino, golden-green,
Encompass it ; and like an angel nears,
Through cypress lights, she whom my soul reveres
And dim through veils of nature I have seen.

Most like the coming of the evening star,
When dawns the night with that sweet miracle,
Her apparition is, from me how far !
But so doth love within my bosom swell,
And in my eyes such wondrous tidings are,
I kneel, expectant of what heaven shall tell.

XXXVIII

O thou who clothest thyself in mystic form,—
Color, and gleam, and lonely distances ;
Whose seat the majesty of ocean is,
Shot o'er with motions of the skyey storm !
Thou with whose mortal breath the soul doth warm
Her being, soaring to eternal bliss ;
Whose revelation unto us is this
Dilated world, starred with its golden swarm !

Thee rather in myself than heaven's vast light
Flooding the daybreak, better I discern ;
The glorious morning makes all nature bright,
But in the soul doth riot more, and burn ;
A thousand beauties rush upon my sight,
But to the greater light within I turn.

XXXIX

I know not who thou art to whom I pray,
Or that indeed thou art, apart from me ;
A dweller in a lone eternity,
Or a participant of my sad way.
I only know that at the fall of day
Fain would I in thy world companion thee ;
Upon the mystery of thy breast to be
Unconscious, and within thy love to stay.

I lose thee in the largeness when I think ;
And when again I feel, I find thee nigh ;

The more my mind goes out to nature's brink,
 The more thou art removèd like the sky ;
 But when concentrated in love I sink,
 Thou art my nucleus ; there I live and die.

XL

Immortal Love, too high for my possessing, —
 Yet, lower than thee, where shall I find repose ?
 Long in my youth I sang the morning rose,
 By earthly things the heavenly pattern guessing !
 Long fared I on, beauty and love caressing,
 And finding in my heart a place for those
 Eternal fugitives ; the golden close
 Of evening folds me, still their sweetness blessing.

Oh, happy we, the first-born heirs of nature,
 For whom the Heavenly Sun delays his light !
 He by the sweets of every mortal creature
 Tempers eternal beauty to our sight ;
 And by the glow upon love's earthly feature
 Maketh the path of our departure bright.

XLI

Adonis-like, gored by the rough world's wound,
 Bleeding and dead full often have I lain ;
 A thousand times, I think, I have been slain,
 And all my beauty strown upon the ground ;
 And I have heard above me then a sound
 Of tears, and hid lament, immortal pain,
 Of one for whom my worship was not vain,
 Though she divinity hath ne'er unbound

To me nor to another ; rose-like there
 I felt strange touches on my limbs and head,
 A shadow moulding o'er me in the air
 Full of the dawning lights about the dead,
 And kisses, smothered in a woman's hair,
 On my cold face and lips in darkness shed.

XLII

Farewell, my Muse ! for, lo, there is no end
 Of singing of the winged and soaring choir,
 Whose flights mount up, and, circling high and higher,
 My heavenly salutations to her send.

I found her upon earth my only friend;
 She fed my boyhood with thy holy fire;
 She drew my manhood from the world's desire.
 Oh, unto my frail state may she yet lend
 Her strength, stay my faint heart, and still console
 A little longer; with a poor man's bread
 Succor my poverty; and pay my toll
 To Charon, when to Lethe I am led!
 And ever round her shine the aureole
 Of my sad verses, after I am dead!

Lizette Woodworth Reese [1856]

SPICE WOOD

The spicewood burns along the gray, spent sky,
 In moist unchimneyed places, in a wind,
 That whips it all before, and all behind,
 Into one thick, rude flame, now low, now high.
 It is the first, the homeliest thing of all —
 At sight of it, that lad that by it fares,
 Whistles afresh his foolish, town-caught airs —
 A thing so honey-colored and so tall!

It is as though the young Year, ere he pass
 To the white riot of the cherry tree,
 Would fain accustom us, or here, or there,
 To his new sudden ways with bough and grass,
 So starts with what is humble, plain to see,
 And all familiar as a cup, a chair.

THE YOUNG MOTHER

The Host lifts high the candlelight —
 “Out in the dark who waits before?
 Now who is this at mid of night,
 Comes faring to my door?”

With rushes is the chamber set;
 The house is sweet without, within;
 For it may be she will forget
 The place where she hath been.

But lonely, lonely in the room,
 With strange eyes looks she all about;
 She sees the broken boughs in bloom,
 And the red wine poured out.

They crowd around her where she stands,
 The children and the elders there;
 They put the cup within her hands;
 They break the loaf so fair.

Oh, what to her that they are kind!
 Oh, let the tears come like a tide!
 She cannot keep from out her mind
 The son for whom she died!

THE HOUSE OF THE SILENT YEARS

The Silent House it standeth wide,—
 Yea, open is the door;
 The winds of Peace from every side
 Blow round it evermore.

Unhewn of axe, unmade of hands,
 Its walls so broad and still;
 Like to a sea the pale gray lands
 Flow up to the gray sill.

Candle were vain, and sun but dim,
 For here the dark doth cease;
 Nor drink nor meat is spread for him,
 Who suppeth here with Peace.

Arrows speed not nor hurtling spear,
 Nor plague cometh to slay;
 Viol and rebec make no cheer,
 For Song hath had his day.

Grief shattereth here his weary cup;
 No watch the hours do keep
 That they may call the red East up,
 Or soothe the West to sleep.

Fashions, desires, dreams, swarming fears,
 Fade past the threshold gray;
 One day is as a thousand years,
 A thousand years one day.

LONELY

Who sits within the house and spins and spins
 A web of silence, louder than a sound,
 And spinning, stares? The rainy sunset thins
 Along the rooms; a bluster of wind pants round

The yard and back again. Its leaves all shed,
Sags the wet lilac hedge, in half-lit airs,
Like strip of long-drenched leather, worn to thread :
Who sits within this house and stares and stares?
Some secret's here. Softly I pace the floor,
For fear that of a sudden it may be known ; —
That footsteps may fleet out each hoarded place,
Some strange dark hand come fumbling at the door,
That aged thing, who spins and spins alone,
Rush out upon me with a pale, drowned face !

A FLOWER OF MULLEIN

I am too near, too clear a thing for you,
A flower of mullein in a crack of wall,
The villagers half-see, or not at all ;
Part of the weather, like the wind or dew.
You love to pluck the different, and find
Stuff for your joy in cloudy loveliness ,
You love to fumble at a door, and guess
At some strange happening that may wait behind.
Yet life is full of tricks, and it is plain,
That men drift back to some worn field or roof,
To grip at comfort in a room, a stair ;
To warm themselves at some flower down a lane :
You, too, may long, grown tired of the aloof,
For the sweet surely of the common air.

W O M E N

Some women herd such little things — a box
Oval and glossy, in its gilt and red,
Or squares of satin, or a high, dark bed —
But when love comes, they drive to it all their flocks ;
Yield up their crooks ; take little ; gain for fold
And pasture each a small, forgotten grave.
When they are gone, then lesser women crave
And squander their sad hoards ; their shepherds' gold.
Some gather life like faggots in a wood,
And crouch its blaze, without a thought at all
Past warming their pinched selves to the last spark.
And women as a whole are swift and good,
In humor scarce, their measure being small ;
They plunge and leap, yet somehow miss the dark.

George Santayana [1863-]

SONNETS

I

Slow and reluctant was the long descent,
 With many farewell pious looks behind,
 And dumb misgivings where the path might wind,
 And questionings of nature, as I went.
 The greener branches that above me bent,
 The broadening valleys, quieted my mind,
 To the fair reasons of the Spring inclined
 And to the Summer's tender argument.
 But sometimes, as revolving night descended,
 And in my childish heart the new song ended,
 I lay down, full of longing, on the steep ;
 And, haunting still the lonely way I wended,
 Into my dreams the ancient sorrow blended,
 And with these holy echoes charmed my sleep.

II

I would I might forget that I am I,
 And break the heavy chain that binds me fast,
 Whose links about myself my deeds have cast.
 What in the body's tomb doth buried lie
 Is boundless ; 't is the spirit of the sky,
 Lord of the future, guardian of the past,
 And soon must forth, to know his own at last.
 In his large life to live I fain would die.
 Happy the dumb beast, hungering for food,
 But calling not his suffering his own ;
 Blessed the angel, gazing on all good,
 But knowing not he sits upon a throne ;
 Wretched the mortal, pondering his mood,
 And doomed to know his aching heart alone.

III

Have patience ; it is fit that in this wise
 The spirit purge away its proper dross.
 No endless fever doth thy watches toss,
 For by excess of evil, evil dies.
 Soon shall the faint world melt before thine eyes,
 And, all life's losses cancelled by life's loss,
 Thou shalt lay down all burdens on thy cross,
 And be that day with God in Paradise.

Have patience ; for a long eternity
 No summons woke thee from thy happy sleep ;
 For love of God one vigil thou canst keep
 And add thy drop of sorrow to the sea.
 Having known grief, all will be well with thee,
 Ay, and thy second slumber will be deep.

IV

Sweet are the days we wander with no hope
 Along life's labyrinthine trodden way,
 With no impatience at the steep's delay,
 Nor sorrow at the swift-descended slope.
 Why this inane curiosity to grope
 In the dim dust for gems' unmeaning ray ?
 Why this proud piety, that dares to pray
 For a world wider than the heaven's cope ?
 Farewell, my burden ! No more will I bear
 The foolish load of my fond faith's despair,
 But trip the idle race with careless feet.
 The crown of olive let another wear ;
 It is my crown to mock the runner's heat
 With gentle wonder and with laughter sweet.

V

'T is love that moveth the celestial spheres
 In endless yearning for the Changeless One,
 And the stars sing together, as they run
 To number the innumerable years.
 'T is love that lifteth through their dewy tears
 The roses' beauty to the heedless sun,
 And with no hope, nor any guerdon won,
 Love leads me on, nor end of love appears.
 For the same breath that did awake the flowers,
 Making them happy with a joy unknown,
 Kindled my light and fixed my spirit's goal ;
 And the same hand that reined the flying hours
 And chained the whirling earth to Phœbus' throne,
 In love's eternal orbit keeps the soul.

VI

As in the midst of battle there is room
 For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth ;
 As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
 Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom ;

As in the crevices of Caesar's tomb
 The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth :
 So in this great disaster of our birth
 We can be happy, and forget our doom.
 For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
 Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
 And evening gently woos us to employ
 Our grief in idle catches. Such is youth ;
 Till from that summer's trance we wake, to find
 Despair before us, vanity behind.

VII

As when the sceptre dangles from the hand
 Of some king doting, faction runneth wild,
 Thieves shake their chains and traitors, long exiled,
 Hover about the confines of the land,
 Till the young Prince, anointed, takes command,
 Full of high purpose, simple, trustful, mild,
 And, smitten by his radiance undefiled,
 The ruffians are abashed, the cowards stand : —
 So in my kingdom riot and despair
 Lived by thy lack, and called for thy control,
 But at thy coming all the world grew fair ;
 Away before thy face the villains stole,
 And panoplied I rose to do and bear,
 When love his clarion sounded in my soul.

VIII

After grey vigils, sunshine in the heart ;
 After long fasting on the journey, food ;
 After sharp thirst, a draught of perfect good
 To flood the soul, and heal her ancient smart.
 Joy of my sorrow, never can we part ;
 Thou broodest o'er me in the haunted wood,
 And with new music fill'st the solitude
 By but so sweetly being what thou art.
 He who hath made thee perfect, makes me blest.
 O fiery minister, on mighty wings
 Bear me, great love, to mine eternal rest.
 Heaven it is to be at peace with things ;
 Come chaos now, and in a whirlwind's rings
 Engulf the planets. I have seen the best.

William Vaughn Moody [1869-1910]

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY

All day he drowses by the sail
With dreams of her, and all night long
The broken waters are at song
Of how she lingers, wild and pale,
When all the temple lights are dumb,
And weaves her spells to make him come.

The wide sea traversed, he will stand
With straining eyes, until the shoal
Green water from the prow shall roll
Upon the yellow strip of sand —
Searching some fern-hid tangled way
Into the forest old and grey.

Then he will leap upon the shore,
And cast one look up at the sun,
Over his loosened locks will run
The dawn breeze, and a bird will pour
Its rapture out to make life seem
Too sweet to leave for such a dream.

But all the swifter will he go
Through the pale, scattered asphodels,
Down mote-hung dusk of olive dells,
To where the ancient basins throw
Fleet threads of blue and trembling zones
Of gold upon the temple stones.

There noon keeps just a twilight trace;
Twixt love and hate, and death and birth,
No man may choose; nor sobs and mirth
May enter in that haunted place.
All day the fountain sphynx lets drip
Slow drops of silence from her lip.

To hold the porch-roof slender girls
Of milk-white marble stand arow;
Doubt never blurs a single brow,
And never the noon's faintness curls
From their expectant hush of pride
The lips the god has glorified.

But these things he will barely view,
Or if he stay to heed them, still

But as the lark the lights that spill
 From out the sun it soars unto,
 Where, past the splendors and the heats,
 The sun's heart's self forever beats.

For wide the brazen doors will swing
 Soon as his sandals touch the pave ;
 The anxious light inside will wave
 And tremble to a lunar ring
 About the form that lieth prone
 Before the dreadful altar-stone.

She will not look or speak or stir,
 But with drowned lips and cheeks death-white
 Will lie amid the pool of light,
 Until, grown faint with thirst of her,
 He shall bow down his face and sink
 Breathless beneath the eddying brink.

Then a swift music will begin,
 And as the brazen doors shut slow,
 There will be hurrying to and fro,
 And lights and calls and silver din,
 While through the star-freaked swirl of air
 The god's sweet cruel eyes will stare.

THAMMUZ

Daughters, daughters, do ye grieve ?
 Crimson dark the freshes flow !
 Were ye violent at eve ?
 Crimson stains where the rushes grow !
 What is this that I must know ?

Mourners by the dark red waters,
 Met ye Thammuz at his play ?
 Was your mood upon you, daughters ?
 Had ye drunken ? O how grey
 Looks your hair in the rising day !

Mourners, mourn not overmuch
 That ye slew your lovely one.
 Such ye are ; and be ye such !
 Lift your heads ; the waters run
 Ruby bright in the climbing sun.

Raven hair and hair of gold,
 Look who bendeth over you !

This is not the shepherd old ;
 This is Thammuz, whom ye slew,
 Radiant Thammuz, risen anew !

PANDORA'S SONGS

(From "The Fire-Bringer")

I

Along the earth and up the sky
 The Fowler spreads his net :
 O soul, what pinions wild and shy
 Are on thy shoulders set ?
 What wings of longing undeterred
 Are native to thee, spirit bird ?

What sky is thine behind the sky,
 For refuge and for ecstasy ?
 Of all thy heavens of clear delight
 Why is each heaven twain,
 O soul ! that when the lure is cast
 Before thy heedless flight,
 And thou art snared and taken fast
 Within one sky of light,
 Behold, the net is empty, the cast is vain,
 And from thy circling in the other sky the lyric laughters rain !

II

Of wounds and sore defeat
 I made my battle stay ;
 Wingèd sandals for my feet
 I wove of my delay ;
 Of weariness and fear,
 I made my shouting spear ;
 Of loss, and doubt, and dread,
 And swift oncoming doom
 I made a helmet for my head
 And a floating plume.
 From the shutting mist of death,
 From the failure of the breath,
 I made a battle-horn to blow
 Across the vales of overthrow.
 O hearken, love, the battle-horn !
 The triumph clear, the silver scorn !
 O hearken where the echoes bring,
 Down the grey disastrous morn,
 Laughter and rallying !

III

Because one creature of his breath
 Sang loud into the face of death,
 Because one child of his despair
 Could strangely hope and wildly dare,
 The Spirit comes to the Bride again,
 And breathes at her door the name of the child ;
 "This is the son that ye bore me ! When
 Shall we kiss, and be reconciled ?"
 Furtive, dumb, in the tardy stone,
 With gropings sweet in the patient sod,
 In the roots of the pine, in the crumbled cone,
 With cries of haste in the willow-rod, —
 By pools where the hyla swells his throat
 And the partridge drums to his crouching mate,
 Where the moorland stag and the mountain goat
 Strictly seek to the ones that wait, —
 In seas awing on the coral bar,
 In feasting depths of the evening star,
 In the dust where the mourner bows his head,
 In the blood of the living, the bones of the dead, —
 Wounded with love in breast and side,
 The Spirit goes in to the Bride !

IV

Too far, too far, though hidden in thine arms ;
 Too darkly far, though lips on lips are laid !
 Love, love, I am afraid ;
 I know not where to find thee in these storms
 That dashed thy changèd breast my breast upon,
 Here in the estranging dawn.
 Unsteadfast ! who didst call and hast not stayed.
 Tryst-breaker ! I have heard
 Thy voice in the green wood, and not deferred : —
 O fold me closer, fugitive one, and say where thou art gone !
 Nay, speak not, strive not, sorrow not at all !
 O, dim and gradual ! —
 Belovèd, my belovèd, shall it be ?
 Keep me, keep me with thy kiss,
 Save me with thy deep embrace ;
 For down the gulfs of spirit space,
 The slow, the implacable winds, now unescapably
 Wheel us downward to our bliss,
 Whelm us, darken us — O lethal winds ! — down to our
 destined place.

Swimming faint, beneath, afar —
 O lover, let there be
 No haste, nor clamor of thy heart to see !
 But I have seen, and I whisper thee
 How the rivers of peace apparent are,
 And the city of bridal peace
 Waits, and wavers, and hardly is,
 Fades, and is folded away from sight ;
 And now like a lily it openeth wistfully,
 Whispering through its courts of light
 “How long shall we be denied ?
 How long must the eastern gate stand wide,
 Ere these who are called shall enter in, and the bridegroom be with
 the bride ?”

V

A thousand æons, nailed in pain
 On the blown world’s plunging prow,
 That seeks across the eternal main, —
 Down whatever storms we drift,
 What disastrous headlands lift,
 Festal lips, triumphant brow,
 Light us with thy joy, as now !

VI

I stood within the heart of God ;
 It seemed a place that I had known :
 (I was blood-sister to the clod,
 Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labor there,
 My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
 My ancient rage, my old despair, —
 Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
 The trees grow bare, and winter come ;
 All was the same as once it was
 Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
 I felt God walk and gaze about ;
 He spoke ; his words seemed held apart
 With gladness and with doubt.

“Here is my meat and wine,” He said,
 “My love, my toil, my ancient care ;

• Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

“Here are my seasons : winter, spring,
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for ; everything
As on my heavenly hills.”

George Sterling

[1869-1926]

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home —
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam ;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie ,
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm —
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

THE SLAYING OF THE WITCH

Erik the prince came back from sea,
His galley low with spoil —
Armor and silks and weeping slaves,
Silver and wine and oil.

And there was one that did not weep,
But laughed in Erik's face,
And 'tween the helmsman and the mast
Strode with a leopard's grace.

Her hair was darker than the night
In which our foemen sink ;
Her limbs were whiter than the milk
Of which our maidens drink.

Her lips were coral-red ; her eyes
As shoaling seas were green.

She wore cupped gold on either breast
And one blue gem between.

And cross her path or say her word
No man save Erik dared,
But all day long men stood apart,
And knit their brows, and stared.

And they have made the harbor strand,
And all have seen her charms;
Erik has borne her to the shore
Uplifted in his arms.

Soon in the council-hall they stood
Of Gudrod, sire and king,
Who bade grey Sigurd, seer and skald,
The prince's valor sing.

Long looked the skald on Erik's face
And face of her he led;
Then snatched the blade from Erik's belt
And stabbed the captive dead.

Erik has sprung at Sigurd's throat,
But four lords hold him fast,
With eyes that glare on nothingness,
And straining arms upcast.

There is hot tumult in the place,
With clash of steel and word,
Until in thunder over all
The king's deep voice is heard.

"Assoil thee, skald! and give good cause
For this that thou hast done,
Or ravens for thy sightless eyes
Shall fight ere set of sun!"

The skald stood silent and apart,
Then smiled upon his deed.
"It is that we bleed not," he said,
"That she in time does bleed."

From isles of sin that one was brought,
Far westward and to-south;
She whispered in a witch's tongue
And has a harlot's mouth.

O Gudrod! in thy grandsire's time
 Such one across the sill
 Was led into the royal house
 To love, and plot her will.

Thou hast heard sung what strong one's death
 Her cunning did devise,
 With sorcery of philtred glance, —
 With promise of her eyes.

Thou hast heard sung the woes she wrought
 With swords of jealous men :
 Know now that in this serpent slain
 That poison came again!

I have done well by thee and thine —
 Thy daughters, lords and son ;
 And many hearts shall go unpierced,
 For that I pierced this one."

He made an end, and stood aloof. . . .
 The great king bent his head. . . .
 Then, gazing long on him that slew,
 "Thou has done well," he said.

But from the sorceress the blood
 Crept slowly on the stone,
 And pointed like a scarlet arm
 At Gudrod on his throne.

BALLAD OF TWO SEAS

"Wherefore thy woe these many years,
 O hermit by the sea?
 What is the grief the winds awake,
 And waters cry to thee?"

"It was in piracy we sailed,
 Great galleons to strip.
 On a far day, on a far sea,
 We took her father's ship.

Red-sided rocked the *Rey del Sur*
 Whenas its deck we won.
 I slew before her eyes divine
 Her father and his son.

There was no sin I had not sinned,
 On deep sea and ashore;
 But when I looked in those great eyes,
 Villain was I no more.

I captain claimed her as my prize.
 Tho maids in common were.
 Alone 'mid that fell company,
 I cast my lot with her.

They put us in an open boat,
 With seven days' food and drink;
 Then slipped those traitor topsails down
 Beyond the ocean's brink.

Night came, and morn, but rose no sail
 On that horizon-verge;
 I took the oars and set our prow
 Against the lessening surge.

It was scant provender we had,
 Tho she was unaware;
 Right soon I feared, and by deceit
 I gave her all my share.

She would not speak; she scarce would look;
 Her pain was past my cure.
 Red-scuppered in our hells of dream
 Wallowed the *Rey del Sur*.

On a far day, on a far sea,
 Our shallop southward crept;
 With aching arms and splitten lips
 I labored — and she wept.

Dawn upon dawn, dark upon dark,
 Nor ever land nor wind!
 The nights were chill, the stars were keen,
 The sun swung hot and blind.

Our drink and food long since were gone. . . .
 We laid us down to die. . . .
 Then came a booming of a surf,
 And palm-trees met mine eye.

I steered us through the broken reef;
 Fainting, I won to shore;

I gazed upon her changéd face,
But she on mine no more.

Below the palms I buried her,
Whose bale-star I had been;
And since, by this bleak coast of snows,
I sorrow for my sin.

There was none other of our kind
That had her heavenly face.
On a far Day, by a far Sea,
I trust to know her grace."

IN AUTUMN

Mine eyes fill, and I know not why at all.
Lies there a country not of time and space —
Some fair and irrecoverable place
I roamed ere birth and cannot now recall? —
A land where petals fall
On paths that I shall nevermore retrace?

Something is lacking from the wistful bow'rs,
And I have lost that which I never had.
The sea cries, and the heavens and sea are sad,
And Love goes desolate, yet is not ours. .
Brown Earth alone is glad,
Robing her breast with fallen leaves and flow'rs.

High memories stir, the spirit's feet are slow,
In nameless fields where tears alone are fruit,
And voices of the wind alone transmute
The music that I lost so long ago.
I stand irresolute,
Lonely for some one I shall never know.

THE PRINCESS ON THE HEADLAND

My mother the queen is dead.
My father the king is old.
He fumbles his cirque of gold
And dreams of a year long fled.
The young men stare at my face,
But cannot meet my glance —
Cavan tall as a lance,
Orra swift in the race.

Death was ever my price,
 Since my maidenhood began :
 At the thought of a Gaelic man
 My heart is sister of ice.
 'T is another for whom I wait,
 Tho I have not kissed his sword :
 He or none is my lord,
 Though our night be soon or late.

The star grows great in my breast :
 It is crying clearly now
 To the star on the burnished prow
 Of his galley far in the West.
 The capes of the North are dim,
 And the windward beaches smoke,
 Where the last long roller spoke
 The tidings it held of him.

Sorrow I know he brings,
 Battle, despair and change, —
 Beauty cruel and strange,
 And the shed bright blood of kings.
 Breast, be white for his sake !
 Mouth, be red for the kiss !
 Soul, be strong for your bliss !
 Heart, be ready to break !

THE QUEEN FORGETS

What came before and afterward
 (She said) I do not know ;
 But I remember well a night
 In a life long ago.

What spoil was I of Egypt sacked ?
 Of what old war the pledge ?
 Around my tent whose army lay,
 At the great desert's edge ?

A maiden, or a Satrap's wife,
 A slave or queen was I
 Who saw that night the steady stars
 Go down the living sky ?

And saw against the heavenly ranks
 How one stood watch and ward.
 Black on the stars he stood, and leaned
 On a cross-hilted sword.

There was no sound in all the camp
 But when a stallion neighed. . . .
 I saw the light of Sirius
 On the cold blade.

Downward, above a single palm,
 Slowly the great star crept;
 More motionless my sentry stood,
 As silently I wept.

What wrath had Libya for my loss?
 In Syria what tears?
 What king or swineherd cursed his god
 In those forgotten years?

The tale is not in tapestry;
 The grey monks do not know. . . .
 Only its shadow touches me
 From out the long ago.

Of terror and of tenderness
 Is that far vigil made,
 And the green light of Sirius
 On the chill blade.

Edwin Arlington Robinson [1869-

JOHN EVERELDOWN

“Where are you going to-night, to-night, —
 Where are you going, John Evereldown?
 There’s never the sign of a star in sight,
 Nor a lamp that’s nearer than Tilbury Town.
 Why do you stare as a dead man might?
 Where are you pointing away from the light?
 And where are you going to-night, to-night, —
 Where are you going, John Evereldown?”

“Right through the forest, where none can see,
 There’s where I’m going, to Tilbury Town.
 The men are asleep, — or awake, may be, —
 But the women are calling John Evereldown.
 Ever and ever they call for me,
 And while they call can a man be free?
 So right through the forest, where none can see,
 There’s where I’m going, to Tilbury Town.”

"But why are you going so late, so late, —
Why are you going, John Everardown?
Though the road be smooth and the way be straight,
There are two long leagues to Tilbury Town.
Come in by the fire, old man, and wait!
Why do you chatter out there by the gate?
And why are you going so late, so late, —
Why are you going, John Everardown?"

"I follow the women wherever they call, —
That 's why I 'm going to Tilbury Town.
God knows if I pray to be done with it all,
But God is no friend to John Everardown.
So the clouds may come and the rain may fall,
The shadows may creep and the dead men crawl, —
But I follow the women wherever they call,
And that 's why I 'm going to Tilbury Town."

LUKE HAVERGAL

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal,
There where the vines cling crimson on the wall,
And in the twilight wait for what will come.
The leaves will whisper there of her, and some,
Like flying words, will strike you as they fall ;
But go, and if you listen she will call.
Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal —
Luke Havergal.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies
To rift the fiery night that 's in your eyes ;
But there, where western glooms are gathering,
The dark will end the dark, if anything :
God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,
And hell is more than half of paradise.
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies —
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss
That flames upon your forehead with a glow
That blinds you to the way that you must go.
Yes, there is yet one way to where she is,
Bitter, but one that faith may never miss.
Out of a grave I come to tell you this —
To tell you this.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal,
 There are the crimson leaves upon the wall.
 Go, for the winds are tearing them away,—
 Nor think to riddle the dead words they say,
 Nor any more to feel them as they fall;
 But go, and if you trust her she will call.
 There is the western gate, Luke Havergal —
 Luke Havergal.

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

They are all gone away,
 The House is shut and still,
 There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray
 The winds blow bleak and shrill.
 They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day
 To speak them good or ill :
 There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
 Around the sunken sill?
 They are all gone away,

And our poor fancy-play
 For them is wasted skill :
 There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
 In the House on the Hill :
 They are all gone away,
 There is nothing more to say.

CLIFF KLINGENHAGEN

Cliff Klingenhagen had me in to dine
 With him one day ; and after soup and meat,
 And all the other things there were to eat,
 Cliff took two glasses and filled one with wine
 And one with wormwood. Then, without a sign
 For me to choose at all, he took the draught
 Of bitterness himself, and lightly quaffed
 It off, and said the other one was mine.

And when I asked him what the deuce he meant
 By doing that, he only looked at me
 And smiled, and said it was a way of his.

And though I know the fellow, I have spent
Long time a-wondering when I shall be
As happy as Cliff Klingenhagen is.

VARIATIONS OF GREEK THEMES

I

A HAPPY MAN

(Carphyllides)

When these graven lines you see,
Traveler, do not pity me;
Though I be among the dead,
Let no mournful words be said.

Children that I leave behind,
And their children, all were kind;
Near to them and to my wife,
I was happy all my life.

My three sons I married right,
And their sons I rocked at night;
Death nor sorrow ever brought
Cause for one unhappy thought.

Now, and with no need of tears,
Here they leave me, full of years,—
Leave me to my quiet rest
In the region of the blest.

II

A MIGHTY RUNNER

(Nicarchus)

The day when Charmus ran with five
In Arcady, as I 'm alive,
He came in seventh. — “Five and one
Make seven, you say? It can't be done.” —
Well, if you think it needs a note,
A friend in a fur overcoat
Ran with him, crying all the while,
“You 'll beat 'em, Charmus, by a mile!”
And so he came in seventh.
Therefore, good Zoilus, you see
The thing is plain as plain can be;
And with four more for company,
He would have been eleventh.

III

THE RAVEN

(Nicarchus)

The gloom of death is on the raven's wing,
 The song of death is in the raven's cries :
 But when Demophilus begins to sing,
 The raven dies.

IV

EUTYCHIDES

(Lucilius)

Eutychides, who wrote the songs,
 Is going down where he belongs. .
 O you unhappy ones, beware :
 Eutychides will soon be there !
 For he is coming with twelve lyres,
 And with more than twice twelve quires
 Of the stuff that he has done
 In the world from which he 's gone.
 Ah, now must you know death indeed,
 For he is coming with all speed ;
 And with Eutychides in Hell,
 Where 's a poor tortured soul to dwell ?

V

DORICHA

(Posidippus)

So now the very bones of you are gone
 Where they were dust and ashes long ago ;
 And there was the last ribbon you tied on
 To bind your hair, and that is dust also ;
 And somewhere there is dust that was of old
 A soft and scented garment that you wore —
 The same that once till dawn did closely fold
 You in with fair Charaxus, fair no more.

But Sappho, and the white leaves of her song,
 Will make your name a word for all to learn,
 And all to love thereafter, even while
 It 's but a name ; and this will be as long
 As there are distant ships that will return
 Again to Naucratis and to the Nile.

VI

THE DUST OF TIMAS

(Sappho)

This dust was Timas; and they say
That almost on her wedding day
She found her bridal home to be
The dark house of Persephone.

And many maidens, knowing then
That she would not come back again,
Unbound their curls; and all in tears,
They cut them off with sharpened shears.

VII

ARETEMIAS

(Antipater of Sidon)

I 'm sure I see it all now as it was,
When first you set your foot upon the shore
Where dim Cocytus flows for evermore,
And how it came to pass
That all those Dorian women who are there
In Hades, and still fair,
Came up to you, so young, and wept and smiled
When they beheld you and your little child.
And then, I 'm sure, with tears upon your face
To be in that sad place,
You told of the two children you had borne,
And then of Euphron, whom you leave to mourn.
“One stays with him,” you said,
“And this one I bring with me to the dead.”

VIII

THE OLD STORY

(Marcus Argentarius)

Like many a one, when you had gold
Love met you smiling, we are told;
But now that all your gold is gone,
Love leaves you hungry and alone.

And women, who have called you more
Sweet names than ever were before,
Will ask another now to tell
What man you are and where you dwell.

Was ever anyone but you
 So long in learning what is true?
 Must you find only at the end
 That who has nothing has no friend?

IX

TO-MORROW

(*Macedonius*)

To-morrow? Then your one word left is always now the same:
 And that's a word that names a day that has no more a name.
 To-morrow, I have learned at last, is all you have to give:
 The rest will be another's now, as long as I may live.
 You will see me in the evening? — And what evening has there
 been,
 Since time began with women, but old age and wrinkled skin?

X

LAIS TO APHRODITE

(*Plato*)

When I, poor Lais, with my crown
 Of beauty could laugh Hellas down,
 Young lovers crowded at my door,
 Where now my lovers come no more.

So, Goddess, you will not refuse
 A mirror that has now no use;
 For what I was I cannot be,
 And what I am I will not see.

XI

AN INSCRIPTION BY THE SEA

(*Glaucus*)

No dust have I to cover me,
 My grave no man may show;
 My tomb is this unending sea,
 And I lie far below.
 My fate, O stranger, was to drown;
 And where it was the ship went down
 Is what the sea-birds know.

CALVERLY'S

We go no more to Calverly's,
For there the lights are few and low ;
And who are there to see by them,
Or what they see, we do not know.
Poor strangers of another tongue
May now creep in from anywhere,
And we, forgotten, be no more
Than twilight on a ruin there.

We two, the remnant. All the rest
Are cold and quiet. You nor I,
Nor fiddle now, nor flagon-lid,
May ring them back from where they lie.
No fame delays oblivion
For them, but something yet survives :
A record written fair, could we
But read the book of scattered lives.

There 'll be a page for Leffingwell,
And one for Lingard, the Moon-calf ;
And who knows what for Clavering,
Who died because he could n't laugh ?
Who knows or cares ? No sign is here,
No face, no voice, no memory ;
No Lingard with his eerie joy,
No Clavering, no Calverly.

We cannot have them here with us
To say where their light lives are gone,
Or if they be of other stuff
Than are the moons of Ilion.
So, be their place of one estate
With ashes, echoes, and old wars, —
Or ever we be of the night,
Or we be lost among the stars.

MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons ;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing ;

The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

FOR A DEAD LADY

No more with overflowing light
Shall fill the eyes that now are faded,
Nor shall another's fringe with night
Their woman-hidden world as they did.
No more shall quiver down the days
The flowing wonder of her ways,
Whereof no language may requite
The shifting and the many-shaded.

The grace, divine, definitive,
Clings only as a faint forestalling;
The laugh that love could not forgive
Is hushed, and answers to no calling;

The forehead and the little ears
Have gone where Saturn keeps the years ;
The breast where roses could not live
Has done with rising and with falling.

The beauty, shattered by the laws
That have creation in their keeping,
No longer trembles at applause,
Or over children that are sleeping ;
And we who delve in beauty's lore
Know all that we have known before
Of what inexorable cause
Makes Time so vicious in his reaping.

HILLCREST

No sound of any storm that shakes
Old island walls with older seas
Comes here where now September makes
An island in a sea of trees.

Between the sunlight and the shade
A man may learn till he forgets
The roaring of a world remade,
And all his ruins and regrets ;

And if he still remembers here
Poor fights he may have won or lost, —
If he be ridden with the fear
Of what some other fight may cost, —

If, eager to confuse too soon,
What he has known with what may be,
He reads a planet out of tune
For cause of his jarred harmony, —

If here he ventures to unroll
His index of adagios,
And he be given to console
Humanity with what he knows, —

He may by contemplation learn
A little more than what he knew,
And even see great oaks return
To acorns out of which they grew.

He may, if he but listen well,
Through twilight and the silence here

Be told what there are none may tell
To vanity's impatient ear;

And he may never dare again
Say what awaits him, or be sure
What sunlit labyrinth of pain
He may not enter and endure.

Who knows to-day from yesterday
May learn to count no thing too strange.
Love builds of what Time takes away,
Till Death itself is less than Change.

Who sees enough in his duress
May go as far as dreams have gone;
Who sees a little may do less
Than many who are blind have done;

Who sees unchastened here the soul
Triumphant has no other sight
Than has a child who sees the whole
World radiant with his own delight.

Far journeys and hard wandering
Await him in whose crude surmise
Peace, like a mask, hides everything
That is and has been from his eyes;

And all his wisdom is unfound,
Or like a web that error weaves
On airy looms that have a sound
No louder now than falling leaves.

OLD KING COLE

In Tilbury Town did Old King Cole
A wise old age anticipate,
Desiring, with his pipe and bowl,
No Khan's extravagant estate.
No crown annoyed his honest head,
No fiddlers three were called or needed;
For two disastrous heirs instead
Made music more than ever three did.

Bereft of her with whom his life
Was harmony without a flaw,
He took no other for a wife,
Nor sighed for any that he saw;

And if he doubted his two sons,
And heirs, Alexis and Evander,
He might have been as doubtful once
Of Robert Burns and Alexander.

Alexis, in his early youth,
Began to steal — from old and young.
Likewise Evander, and the truth
Was like a bad taste on his tongue.
Born thieves and liars, their affair
Seemed only to be tarred with evil —
The most insufferable pair
Of scamps that ever cheered the devil.

The world went on, their fame went on,
And they went on — from bad to worse ;
Till, goaded hot with nothing done,
And each accoutred with a curse,
The friends of Old King Cole, by twos,
And fours, and sevens, and elevens,
Pronounced unalterable views
Of doings that were not of heaven's.

And having learned again whereby
Their baleful zeal had come about,
King Cole met many a wrathful eye
So kindly that its wrath went out —
Or partly out. Say what they would,
He seemed the more to court their candor ;
But never told what kind of good
Was in Alexis and Evander.

And Old King Cole, with many a puff
That haloed his urbanity,
Would smoke till he had smoked enough,
And listen most attentively.
He beamed as with an inward light
That had the Lord's assurance in it ;
And once a man was there all night,
Expecting something every minute.

But whether from too little thought,
Or two much fealty to the bowl,
A dim reward was all he got
For sitting up with Old King Cole.

"Though mine," the father mused aloud,
 "Are not the sons I would have chosen,
 Shall I, less evilly endowed,
 By their infirmity be frozen?

"They 'll have a bad end, I 'll agree,
 But I was never born to groan ;
 For I can see what I can see,
 And I 'm accordingly alone.
 With open heart and open door,
 I love my friends, I like my neighbors ;
 But if I try to tell you more,
 Your doubts will overmatch my labors.

"This pipe would never make me calm,
 This bowl my grief would never drown.
 For grief like mine there is no balm
 In Gilead, or in Tilbury Town.
 And if I see what I can see,
 I know not any way to blind it ;
 Nor more if any way may be
 For you to grope or fly to find it.

"There may be room for ruin yet,
 And ashes for a wasted love ;
 Or, like One whom you may forget,
 I may have meat you know not of.
 And if I 'd rather live than weep
 Meanwhile, do you find that surprising ?
 Why, bless my soul, the man 's asleep !
 That 's good. The sun will soon be rising."

BEN JONSON ENTERTAINS A MAN FROM STRATFORD

You are a friend then, as I make it out,
 Of our man Shakespeare, who alone of us
 Will put an ass's head in Fairyland
 As he would add a shilling to more shillings,
 All most harmonious, — and out of his
 Miraculous inviolable increase
 Fills Ilion, Rome, or any town you like
 Of olden time with timeless Englishmen ;
 And I must wonder what you think of him —
 All you down there where your small Avon flows
 By Stratford, and where you 're an Alderman.

Some, for a guess, would have him riding back
To be a farrier there, or say a dyer;
Or maybe one of your adept surveyors;
Or like enough the wizard of all tanners.
Not you — no fear of that; for I discern
In you a kindling of the flame that saves —
The nimble element, the true caloric;
I see it, and was told of it, moreover,
By our discriminate friend himself, no other.
Had you been one of the sad average,
As he would have it, — meaning, as I take it,
The sinew and the solvent of our Island,
You'd not be buying beer for this Terpander's
Approved and estimated friend Ben Jonson;
He'd never foist it as a part of his
Contingent entertainment of a townsman
While he goes off rehearsing, as he must,
If he shall ever be the Duke of Stratford.
And my words are no shadow on your town —
Far from it; for one town 's as like another
As all are unlike London. Oh, he knows it, —
And there 's the Stratford in him; he denies it,
And there 's the Shakespeare in him. So, God help him!
I tell him he needs Greek; but neither God
Nor Greek will help him. Nothing will help that man.
You see the fates have given him so much,
He must have all or perish, — or look out
Of London, where he sees too many lords.
They 're part of half what ails him: I suppose
There 's nothing fouler down among the demons
Than what it is he feels when he remembers
The dust and sweat and ointment of his calling
With his lords looking on and laughing at him.
King as he is, he can't be king *de facto*,
And that 's as well, because he would n't like it;
He'd frame a lower rating of men then
Than he has now; and after that would come
An abdication or an apoplexy.
He can't be king, not even king of Stratford, —
Though half the world, if not the whole of it,
May crown him with a crown that fits no king
Save Lord Apollo's homesick emissary:
Not there on Avon, or on any stream
Where Naiads and their white arms are no more,
Shall he find home again. It 's all too bad.
But there 's a comfort, for he 'll have that House —

The best you ever saw ; and he 'll be there
Anon, as you 're an Alderman. Good God !
He makes me lie awake o' nights and laugh.

And you have known him from his origin,
You tell me ; and a most uncommon urchin
He must have been to the few seeing ones —
A trifle terrifying, I dare say,
Discovering a world with his man's eyes,
Quite as another lad might see some finches,
If he looked hard and had an eye for nature.
But this one had his eyes and their foretelling,
And he had you to fare with, and what else ?
He must have had a father and a mother —
In fact I 've heard him say so — and a dog,
As a boy should, I venture ; and the dog,,
Most likely, was the only man who knew him.
A dog, for all I know, is what he needs
As much as anything right here to-day,
To counsel him about his disillusionments,
Old aches, and parturitions of what 's coming, —
A dog of orders, an emeritus,
To wag his tail at him when he comes home,
And then to put his paws up on his knees
And say, "For God's sake, what 's it all about ?"

I don't know whether he needs a dog or not —
Or what he needs. I tell him he needs Greek ;
I 'll talk of rules and Aristotle with him,
And if his tongue 's at home he 'll say to that,
"I have your word that Aristotle knows,
And you mine that I don't know Aristotle."
He 's all at odds with all the unities,
And what 's yet worse, it does n't seem to matter ;
He treads along through Time's old wilderness
As if the tramp of all the centuries
Had left no roads — and there are none, for him ;
He does n't see them, even with those eyes, —
And that 's a pity, or I say it is.
Accordingly we have him as we have him —
Going his way, the way that he goes best,
A pleasant animal with no great noise
Or nonsense anywhere to set him off —
Save only divers and inclement devils
Have made of late his heart their dwelling place.
A flame half ready to fly out sometimes

At some annoyance may be fanned up in him,
But soon it falls, and when it falls goes out;
He knows how little room there is in there
For crude and futile animosities,
And how much for the joy of being whole,
And how much for long sorrow and old pain.
On our side there are some who may be given
To grow old wondering what he thinks of us
And some above us, who are, in his eyes,
Above himself, — and that 's quite right and English.
Yet here we smile, or disappoint the gods
Who made it so: the gods have always eyes
To see men scratch; and they see one down here
Who itches, manor-bitten to the bone,
Albeit he knows himself — yes, yes, he knows —
The lord of more than England and of more
Than all the seas of England in all time
Shall ever wash. D' ye wonder that I laugh?
He sees me, and he does n't seem to care;
And why the devil should he? I can't tell you.

I 'll meet him out alone of a bright Sunday,
Trim, rather spruce, and quite the gentleman.
"What ho, my lord!" say I. He does n't hear me;
Wherefore I have to pause and look at him.
He 's not enormous, but one looks at him.
A little on the round if you insist,
For now, God save the mark, he 's growing old;
He 's five and forty, and to hear him talk
These days you 'd call him eighty; then you 'd add
More years to that. He 's old enough to be
The father of a world, and so he is.
"Ben, you 're a scholar, what 's the time of day?"
Says he; and there shines out of him again
An aged light that has no age or station —
The mystery that 's his — a mischievous
Half-mad serenity that laughs at fame
For being won so easy, and at friends
Who laugh at him for what he wants the most,
And for his dukedom down in Warwickshire; —
By which you see we 're all a little jealous. . . .
Poor Greene! I fear the color of his name
Was even as that of his ascending soul;
And he was one where there are many others, —
Some scrivening to the end against their fate,
Their puppets all in ink and all to die there;

And some with hands that once would shade an eye
That scanned Euripides and Æschylus
Will reach by this time for a pot-house mop
To slush their first and last of royalties.
Poor devils ! and they all play to his hand ;
For so it was in Athens and old Rome.
But that 's not here or there ; I 've wandered off.
Greene does it, or I 'm careful. Where 's that boy ?

Yes, he 'll go back to Stratford. And we 'll miss him ?
Dear sir, there 'll be no London here without him.
We 'll all be riding, one of these fine days,
Down there to see him — and his wife won't like us ;
And then we 'll think of what he never said
Of women — which, if taken all in all
With what he did say, would buy many horses.
Though nowadays he 's not so much for women : -
"So few of them," he says, "are worth the guessing."
But there 's a worm at work when he says that,
And while he says it one feels in the air
A deal of circumambient hocus-pocus.
They 've had him dancing till his toes were tender,
And he can feel 'em now, come chilly rains.
There 's no long cry for going into it,
However, and we don't know much about it.
But you in Stratford, like most here in London,
Have more now in the *Sonnets* than you paid for ;
He 's put one there with all her poison on,
To make a singing fiction of a shadow
That 's in his life a fact, and always will be.
But she 's no care of ours, though Time, I fear,
Will have a more reverberant ado
About her than about another one
Who seems to have decoyed him, married him,
And sent him scuttling on his way to London, —
With much already learned, and more to learn,
And more to follow. Lord ! how I see him now,
Pretending, maybe trying, to be like us.
Whatever he may have meant, we never had him ;
He failed us, or escaped, or what you will, —
And there was that about him (God knows what, —
We 'd flayed another had he tried it on us)
That made as many of us as had wits
More fond of all his easy distances
Than one another's noise and clap-your-shoulder.
But think you not, my friend, he 'd never talk !

Talk? He was eldritch at it; and we listened —
Thereby acquiring much we knew before
About ourselves, and hitherto had held
Irrelevant, or not prime to the purpose.
And there were some, of course, and there be now,
Disordered and reduced amazedly
To resignation by the mystic seal
Of young finality the gods had laid
On everything that made him a young demon;
And one or two shot looks at him already
As he had been their executioner;
And once or twice he was, not knowing it, —
Or knowing, being sorry for poor clay
And saying nothing. . . . Yet, for all his engines,
You 'll meet a thousand of an afternoon
Who strut and sun themselves and see around 'em
A world made out of more that has a reason
Than his, I swear, that he sees here to-day;
Though he may scarcely give a Fool an exit
But we mark how he sees in everything
A law that, given we flout it once too often,
Brings fire and iron down on our naked heads.
To me it looks as if the power that made him,
For fear of giving all things to one creature,
Left out the first, — faith, innocence, illusion,
Whatever 't is that keeps us out o' Bedlam, —
And thereby, for his too consuming vision,
Empowered him out of nature; though to see him,
You 'd never guess what 's going on inside him.
He 'll break out some day like a keg of ale
With too much independent frenzy in it;
And all for cellaring what he knows won't keep,
And what he 'd best forget — but that he can't.
You 'll have it, and have more than I 'm foretelling;
And there 'll be such a roaring at the Globe
As never stunned the bleeding gladiators.
He 'll have to change the color of its hair
A bit, for now he calls it Cleopatra.
Black hair would never do for Cleopatra.
But you and I are not yet two old women,
And you 're a man of office. What he does
Is more to you than how it is he does it, —
And that 's what the Lord God has never told him.
They work together, and the Devil helps 'em;
They do it of a morning, or if not,
They do it of a night; in which event

He 's peevish of a morning. He seems old ;
He 's not the proper stomach or the sleep —
And they 're two sovran agents to conserve him
Against the fiery art that has no mercy
But what 's in that prodigious grand new House.
I gather something happening in his boyhood
Fulfilled him with a boy's determination
To make all Stratford 'ware of him. Well, well,
I hope at last he 'll have his joy of it,
And all his pigs and sheep and bellowing beeves,
And frogs and owls and unicorns, moreover,
Be less than hell to his attendant ears.
Oh, past a doubt we 'll all go down to see him.

He may be wise. With London two days off,
Down there some wind of heaven may yet revive him ;
But there 's no quickening breath from anywhere
Shall make of him again the poised young faun
From Warwickshire, who 'd made, it seems, already
A legend of himself before I came
To blink before the last of his first lightning.
Whatever there be, there 'll be no more of that ;
The coming on of his old monster Time
Has made him a still man ; and he has dreams
Were fair to think on once, and all found hollow.
He knows how much of what men paint themselves
Would blister in the light of what they are ;
He sees how much of what was great now shares
An eminence transformed and ordinary ;
He knows too much of what the world has hushed
In others, to be loud now for himself ;
He knows now at what height low enemies
May reach his heart, and high friends let him fall ;
But what not even such as he may know
Bedevels him the worst : his lark may sing
At heaven's gate how he will, and for as long
As joy may listen, but *he* sees no gate,
Save one whereat the spent clay waits a little
Before the churchyard has it, and the worm.
Not long ago, late in an afternoon,
I came on him unseen down Lambeth way,
And on my life I was afear'd of him :
He gloomed and mumbled like a soul from Tophet,
His hands behind him and his head bent solemn.
"What is it now," said I, — "another woman?"
That made him sorry for me, and he smiled.

"No, Ben," he mused; "it 's Nothing. It 's all Nothing.
 We come, we go ; and when we 're done, we 're done.
 Spiders and flies — we 're mostly one or t' other —
 We come, we go ; and when we 're done, we 're done."
 "By God, you sing that song as if you knew it!"
 Said I, by way of cheering him ; "what ails ye?"
 "I think I must have come down here to think,"
 Says he to that, and pulls his little beard ;
 "Your fly will serve as well as anybody,
 And what 's his hour? He flies, and flies, and flies,
 And in his fly's mind has a brave appearance ;
 And then your spider gets him in her net,
 And eats him out, and hangs him up to dry.
 That 's Nature, the kind mother of us all.
 And then your slattern housemaid swings her broom,
 And where 's your spider? And that 's Nature, also.
 It 's Nature, and it 's Nothing. It 's all Nothing.
 It 's all a world where bugs and emperors
 Go singularly back to the same dust,
 Each in his time ; and the old, ordered stars
 That sang together, Ben, will sing the same
 Old stave to-morrow."

When he talks like that,

There 's nothing for a human man to do
 But lead him to some grateful nook like this
 Where we be now, and there to make him drink.
 He 'll drink, for love of me, and then be sick ;
 A sad sign always in a man of parts,
 And always very ominous. The great
 Should be as large in liquor as in love, —
 And our great friend is not so large in either :
 One disaffects him, and the other fails him ;
 Whatso he drinks that has an antic in it,
 He 's wondering what 's to pay in his insides ;
 And while his eyes are on the Cyprian
 He 's fribbling all the time with that damned House.
 We laugh here at his thrift, but after all
 It may be thrift that saves him from the devil ;
 God gave it, anyhow, — and we 'll suppose
 He knew the compound of his handiwork.
 To-day the clouds are with him, but anon
 He 'll out of 'em enough to shake the tree
 Of life itself and bring down fruit unheard-of, —
 And, throwing in the bruised and whole together,
 Prepare a wine to make us drunk with wonder ;

And if he live, there 'll be a sunset spell
Thrown over him as over a glassed lake
That yesterday was all a black wild water.

God send he live to give us, if no more,
What now 's a-rampage in him, and exhibit,
With a decent half-allegiance to the ages
An earnest of at least a casual eye
Turned once on what he owes to Gutenberg,
And to the fealty of more centuries
Than are as yet a picture in our vision.

"There 's time enough, — I 'll do it when I 'm old,
And we 're immortal men," he says to that;
And then he says to me, "Ben, what 's 'immortal'?
Think you by any force of ordination
It may be nothing of a sort more noisy
Than a small oblivion of component ashes
That of a dream-addicted world was once
A moving atomy much like your friend here?"
Nothing will help that man. To make him laugh,
I said then he was a mad mountebank, —
And by the Lord I nearer made him cry.
I could have eat an eft then, on my knees,
Tail, claws, and all of him; for I had stung
The king of men, who had no sting for me,
And I had hurt him in his memories;
And I say now, as I shall say again,
I love the man this side idolatry.

He 'll do it when he 's old, he says. I wonder.
He may not be so ancient as all that.
For such as he, the thing that is to do
Will do itself, — but there 's a reckoning;
The sessions that are now too much his own,
The roiling inward of a stilled outside,
The churning out of all those blood-fed lines,
The nights of many schemes and little sleep,
The full brain hammered hot with too much thinking,
The vexed heart over-worn with too much aching, —
This weary jangling of conjoined affairs
Made out of elements that have no end,
And all confused at once, I understand,
Is not what makes a man to live forever.
O no, not now! He 'll not be going now:
There 'll be time yet for God knows what explosions
Before he goes. He 'll stay awhile. Just wait:

Just wait a year or two for Cleopatra,
For she 's to be a balsam and a comfort ;
And that 's not all a jape of mine now, either.
For granted once the old way of Apollo
Sings in a man, he may then, if he 's able,
Strike unafraid whatever strings he will
Upon the last and wildest of new lyres ;
Nor out of his new magic, though it hymn
The shrieks of dungeoned hell, shall he create
A madness or a gloom to shut quite out
A cleaving daylight, and a last great calm
Triumphant over shipwreck and all storms.
He might have given Aristotle creeps,
But surely would have given him his *katharsis*.

He 'll not be going yet. There 's too much yet
Unsung within the man. But when he goes,
I 'd stake ye coin o' the realm his only care
For a phantom world he sounded and found wanting
Will be a portion here, a portion there,
Of this or that thing or some other thing
That has a patent and intrinsical
Equivalence in those egregious shillings.
And yet he knows, God help him ! Tell me, now,
If ever there was anything let loose
On earth by gods or devils heretofore
Like this mad, careful, proud, indifferent Shakespeare !
Where was it, if it ever was ? By heaven,
'T was never yet in Rhodes or Pergamon —
In Thebes or Nineveh, a thing like this !
No thing like this was ever out of England ;
And that he knows. I wonder if he cares.
Perhaps he does. . . . O Lord, that House in Stratford !

EROS TURANNOS

She fears him, and will always ask
 What fated her to choose him ;
She meets in his engaging mask
 All reasons to refuse him ;
But what she meets and what she fears
 Are less than are the downward years,
Drawn slowly to the foamless weirs
 Of age, were she to lose him.

Between a blurred sagacity
 That once had power to sound him,

And Love, that will not let him be
 The Judas that she found him,
 Her pride assuages her almost,
 As if it were alone the cost. —
 He sees that he will not be lost,
 And waits and looks around him.

A sense of ocean and old trees
 Envelops and allures him ;
 Tradition, touching all he sees,
 Beguiles and reassures him ;
 And all her doubts of what he says
 Are dimmed with what she knows of days —
 Till even prejudice delays
 And fades, and she secures him.

The falling leaf inaugurates
 The reign of her confusion :
 The pounding wave reverberates
 The dirge of her illusion ;
 And home, where passion lived and died,
 Becomes a place where she can hide,
 While all the town and harbor side
 Vibrate with her seclusion.

We tell you, tapping on our brows,
 The story as it should be, —
 As if the story of a house
 Were told, or ever could be ;
 We 'll have no kindly veil between
 Her visions and those we have seen, —
 As if we guessed what hers have been,
 Or what they are or would be.

Meanwhile we do no harm ; for they
 That with a god have striven,
 Not hearing much of what we say,
 Take what the god has given ;
 Though like waves breaking it may be,
 Or like a changed familiar tree,
 Or like a stairway to the sea
 Where down the blind are driven.

THE MAN AGAINST THE SKY

Between me and the sunset, like a dome
 Against the glory of a world on fire,
 Now burned a sudden hill,

Bleak, round, and high, by flame-lit height made higher,
 With nothing on it for the flame to kill
 Save one who moved and was alone up there
 To loom before the chaos and the glare
 As if he were the last god going home
 Unto his last desire.

Dark, marvelous, and inscrutable he moved on
 Till down the fiery distance he was gone, —
 Like one of those eternal, remote things
 That range across a man's imaginings
 When a sure music fills him and he knows
 What he may say thereafter to few men, —
 The touch of ages having wrought
 An echo and a glimpse of what he thought
 A phantom or a legend until then;
 For whether lighted over ways that save,
 Or lured from all repose,
 If he go on too far to find a grave,
 Mostly alone he goes.

Even he, who stood where I had found him,
 On high with fire all round him,
 Who moved along the molten west,
 And over the round hill's crest
 That seemed half ready with him to go down,
 Flame-bitten and flame-cleft,
 As if there were to be no last thing left
 Of a nameless unimaginable town, —
 Even he who climbed and vanished may have taken
 Down to the perils of a depth not known,
 From death defended though by men forsaken,
 The bread that every man must eat alone;
 He may have walked while others hardly dared
 Look on to see him stand where many fell;
 And upward out of that, as out of hell,
 He may have sung and striven
 To mount where more of him shall yet be given,
 Bereft of all retreat,
 To sevenfold heat, —
 As on a day when three in Dura shared
 The furnace, and were spared
 For glory by that king of Babylon
 Who made himself so great that God, who heard,
 Covered him with long feathers, like a bird.

Again, he may have gone down easily,
By comfortable altitudes, and found,
As always, underneath him solid ground
Whereon to be sufficient and to stand
Possessed already of the promised land,
Far stretched and fair to see :
A good sight, verily,
And one to make the eyes of her who bore him
Shine glad with hidden tears.
Why question of his ease of who before him,
In one place or another where they left
Their names as far behind them as their bones,
And yet by dint of slaughter toil and theft,
And shrewdly sharpened stones,
Carved hard the way for his ascendancy
Through deserts of lost years ?
Why trouble him now who sees and hears
No more than what his innocence requires,
And therefore to no other height aspires
Than one at which he neither quails nor tires ?
He may do more by seeing what he sees
Than others eager for iniquities ;
He may, by seeing all things for the best,
Incite futurity to do the rest.

Or with an even likelihood,
He may have met with atrabilious eyes
The fires of time on equal terms and passed
Indifferently down, until at last
His only kind of grandeur would have been,
Apparently, in being seen.
He may have had for evil or for good
No argument ; he may have had no care
For what without himself went anywhere
To failure or to glory, and least of all
For such a stale, flamboyant miracle ;
He may have been the prophet of an art
Immovable to old idolatries ;
He may have been a player without a part,
Annoyed that even the sun should have the skies
For such a flaming way to advertise ;
He may have been a painter sick at heart
With Nature's toiling for a new surprise ;
He may have been a cynic, who now, for all
Of anything divine that his effete
Negation may have tasted,

Saw truth in his own image, rather small,
Forbore to fever the ephemeral,
Found any barren height a good retreat
From any swarming street,
And in the sun saw power superbly wasted :
And when the primitive old-fashioned stars
Came out again to shine on joys and wars
More primitive, and all arrayed for doom,
He may have proved a world a sorry thing
In his imagining,
And life a lighted highway to the tomb.

Or, mounting with infirm unsearching tread,
His hopes to chaos led,
He may have stumbled up there from the past,
And with an aching strangeness viewed the last
Abysmal conflagration of his dreams, —
A flame where nothing seems
To burn but flame itself, by nothing fed ;
And while it all went out,
Not even the faint anodyne of doubt
May then have eased a painful going down
From pictured heights of power and lost renown,
Revealed at length to his outlived endeavor
Remote and unapproachable forever ;
And at his heart there may have gnawed
Sick memories of a dead faith foiled and flawed
And long dishonored by the living death
Assigned alike by chance
To brutes and hierophants ;
And anguish fallen on those he loved around him
May once have dealt the last blow to confound him,
And so have left him as death leaves a child,
Who sees it all too near ;
And he who knows no young way to forget
May struggle to the tomb unreconciled.
Whatever suns may rise or set
There may be nothing kinder for him here
Than shafts and agonies ;
And under these
He may cry out and stay on horribly ;
Or, seeing in death too small a thing to fear,
He may go forward like a stoic Roman
Where pangs and terrors in his pathway lie, —
Or, seizing the swift logic of a woman,
Curse God and die.

Or maybe there, like many another one
Who might have stood aloft and looked ahead,
Black-drawn against wild red,
He may have built, unawed by fiery gules
That in him no commotion stirred,
A living reason out of molecules
Why molecules occurred,
And one for smiling when he might have sighed
Had he seen far enough,
And in the same inevitable stuff
Discovered an odd reason too for pride
In being that he must have been by laws
Infrangible and for no kind of cause.
Deterred by no confusion or surprise
He may have seen with his mechanic eyes
A world without a meaning, and had room,
Alone amid magnificence and doom,
To build himself an airy monument
That should, or fail him in his vague intent,
Outlast an accidental universe —
To call it nothing worse —
Or, by the burrowing guile
Of Time disintegrated and effaced,
Like once-remembered mighty trees go down
To ruin, of which by man may now be traced
No part sufficient even to be rotten,
And in the book of things that are forgotten
Is entered as a thing not quite worth while.
He may have been so great
That satraps would have shivered at his frown.
And all he prized alive may rule a state
No larger than a grave that holds a clown;
He may have been a master of his fate,
And of his atoms, — ready as another
In his emergence to exonerate
His father and his mother ;
He may have been a captain of a host,
Self-eloquent and ripe for prodigies,
Doomed here to swell by dangerous degrees,
And then give up the ghost.
Nahum's great grasshoppers were such as these,
Sun-scattered and soon lost.

Whatever the dark road he may have taken,
This man who stood on high
And faced alone the sky,

Whatever drove or lured or guided him, —
A vision answering a faith unshaken,
An easy trust assumed of easy trials,
A sick negation born of weak denials,
A crazed abhorrence of an old condition,
A blind attendance on a brief ambition, —
Whatever stayed him or derided him,
His way was even as ours ;
And we, with all our wounds and all our powers,
Must each await alone at his own height
Another darkness or another light ;
And there, of our poor self dominion reft,
If inference and reason shun
Hell, Heaven, and Oblivion,
May thwarted will (perforce precarious,
But for our conservation better thus)
Have no misgiving left
Of doing yet what here we leave undone ?
Or if unto the last of these we cleave,
Believing or protesting we believe
In such an idle and ephemeral
Florescence of the diabolical, —
If, robbed of two fond old enormities,
Our being had no onward auguries,
What then were this great love of ours to say
For launching other lives to voyage again
A little farther into time and pain,
A little faster in a futile chase
For a kingdom and a power and a Race
That would have still in sight
A manifest end of ashes and eternal night ?
Is this the music of the toys we shake
So loud, — as if there might be no mistake
Somewhere in our indomitable will ?
Are we no greater than the noise we make
Along one blind atomic pilgrimage
Whereon by crass chance billeted we go
Because our brains and bones and cartilage
Will have it so ?
If this we say, then let us all be still
About our share in it, and live and die
More quietly thereby.

Where was he going, this man against the sky ?
You know not, nor do I.
But this we know, if we know anything :

That we may laugh and fight and sing
And of our transience here make offering
To an orient Word that will not be erased,
Or, save in incomminable gleams
Too permanent for dreams,
Be found or known.
No tonic and ambitious irritant
Of increase or of want
Has made in otherwise insensate waste
Of ages overthrown
A ruthless, veiled, implacable foretaste
Of other ages that are still to be
Depleted and rewarded variously
Because a few, by fate's economy,
Shall seem to move the world the way it goes ;
No soft evangel of equality,
Safe-cradled in a communal repose
That huddles into death and may at last
Be covered well with equatorial snows —
And all for what, the devil only knows —
Will aggregate an inkling to confirm
The credit of a sage or of a worm,
Or tell us why one man in five
Should have a care to stay alive
While in his heart he feels no violence
Laid on his humor and intelligence
When infant Science makes a pleasant face
And waves again that hollow toy, the Race ;
No planetary trap where souls are wrought
For nothing but the sake of being caught
And sent again to nothing will attune
Itself to any key of any reason
Why man should hunger through another season
To find out why 't were better late than soon
To go away and let the sun and moon
And all the silly stars illuminate
A place for creeping things,
And those that root and trumpet and have wings,
And herd and ruminate,
Or dive and flash and poise in rivers and seas,
Or by their loyal tails in lofty trees
Hang screeching lewd victorious derision
Of man's immortal vision.
Shall we, because Eternity records

Too vast an answer for the time-born words
We spell, whereof so many are dead that once
In our capricious lexicons
Were so alive and final, hear no more
The Word itself, the living word
That none alive has ever heard
Or ever spelt,
And few have ever felt
Without the fears and old surrendерings
And terrors that began
When Death let fall a feather from his wings
And humbled the first man?
Because the weight of our humility,
Wherfrom we gain
A little wisdom and much pain,
Falls here too sore and there too tedious,
Are we in anguish or complacency,
Not looking far enough ahead
To see by what mad couriers we are led
Along the roads of the ridiculous,
To pity ourselves and laugh at faith
And while we curse life bear it?
And if we see the soul's dead end in death,
Are we to fear it?
What folly is here that has not yet a name
Unless we say outright that we are liars?
What have we seen beyond our sunset fires
That lights again the way by which we came?
Why pay we such a price, and one we give
So clamoringly, for each racked empty day
That leads one more last human hope away,
As quiet fiends would lead past our crazed eyes
Our children to an unseen sacrifice?
If after all that we have lived and thought,
All comes to Nought, —
If there be nothing after Now,
And we be nothing anyhow,
And we know that, — why live?
'T were sure but weaklings' vain distress
To suffer dungeons where so many doors
Will open on the cold eternal shores
That look sheer down
To the dark tideless floods of Nothingness
Where all who know may drown.

THE MILL

The miller's wife had waited long,
 The tea was cold, the fire was dead ;
 And there might yet be nothing wrong
 In how he went and what he said :
 "There are no millers any more,"
 Was all that she had heard him say ;
 And he had lingered at the door
 So long that it seemed yesterday.

Sick with a fear that had no form
 She knew that she was there at last ;
 And in the mill there was a warm
 And mealy fragrance of the past.
 What else there was would only seem
 To say again what he had meant ;
 And what was hanging from a beam
 Would not have heeded where she went.

And if she thought it followed her,
 She may have reasoned in the dark
 That one way of the few there were
 Would hide her and would leave no mark :
 Black water, smooth above the weir
 Like starry velvet in the night,
 Though ruffled once, would soon appear
 The same as ever to the sight.

THE DARK HILLS

Dark hills at evening in the west,
 Where sunset hovers like a sound
 Of golden horns that sang to rest
 Old bones of warriors under ground,
 Far now from all the bannered ways
 Where flash the legions of the sun,
 You fade — as if the last of days
 Were fading, and all wars were done.

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
 Over the hill between the town below
 And the forsaken upland hermitage
 That held as much as he should ever know
 On earth again of home, paused warily.

The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"
Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood —
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang —

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,
The last word wavered, and the song was done.
He raised again the jug regretfully
And shook his head, and was again alone.
There was not much that was ahead of him,
And there was nothing in the town below —
Where strangers would have shut the many doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

THE SHEAVES

Where long the shadows of the wind had rolled,
Green wheat was yielding to the change assigned ;
And as by some vast magic undivined
The world was turning slowly into gold.
Like nothing that was ever bought or sold
It waited there, the body and the mind ;
And with a mighty meaning of a kind
That tells the more the more it is not told.

So in a land where all days are not fair,
Fair days went on till on another day
A thousand golden sheaves were lying there,
Shining and still, but not for long to stay —
As if a thousand girls with golden hair
Might rise from where they slept and go away.

NEW ENGLAND

Here where the wind is always north-north-east
And children learn to walk on frozen toes,
Wonder begets an envy of all those
Who boil elsewhere with such a lyric yeast
Of love that you will hear them at a feast
Where demons would appeal for some repose,
Still clamoring where the chalice overflows
And crying wildest who have drunk the least.

Passion is here a soilure of the wits,
We 're told, and Love a cross for them to bear ;
Joy shivers in the corner where she knits
And Conscience always has the rocking-chair,
Cheerful as when she tortured into fits
The first cat that was ever killed by Care.

Stephen Crane [1871-1900]

FROM "THE BLACK RIDERS"

I

Black riders came from the sea.
 There was clang and clang of spear and shield,
 And clash and clash of hoof and heel,
 Wild shouts and the wave of hair
 In the rush upon the wind :
 Thus the ride of Sin.

II

Once I saw mountains angry,
 And ranged in battle-front.
 Against them stood a little man ;
 Ay, he was no bigger than my finger.
 I laughed, and spoke to one near me,
 "Will he prevail ?"
 "Surely," replied this other ;
 "His grandfathers beat them many times."
 Then did I see much virtue in grandfathers —
 At least, for the little man
 Who stood against the mountains.

III

On the horizon the peaks assembled ;
 And as I looked,
 The march of the mountains began.
 As they marched, they sang,
 "Ay ! we come ! we come !"

FROM "WAR IS KIND"

I

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
 Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
 And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
 Do not weep.
 War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
 Little souls who thirst for fight,
 These men were born to drill and die.

The unexplained glory flies above them,
 Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom —
 A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
 Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
 Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
 Do not weep.
 War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
 Eagle with crest of red and gold,
 These men were born to drill and die.
 Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
 Make plain to them the excellence of killing
 And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
 On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
 Do not weep.
 War is kind.

II

Once I saw thee idly rocking
 — Idly rocking —
 And chattering girlishly to other girls,
 Bell-voiced, happy,
 Careless with the stout heart of unscarred womanhood,
 And life to thee was all light melody.
 I thought of the great storms of love as I knew it.
 Torn, miserable, and ashamed of my open sorrow,
 I thought of the thunders that lived in my head,
 And I wished to be an ogre,
 And hale and haul my beloved to a castle,
 And there use the happy cruel one cruelly,
 And make her mourn with my mourning.

III

Love met me at noonday
 — Reckless imp,
 To leave his shaded nights
 And brave the glare —
 And I saw him then plainly
 For a bungler,
 A stupid, simpering, eyeless bungler,
 Breaking the hearts of brave people
 As the snivelling idiot-boy cracks his bowl,

And I cursed him,
Cursed him to and fro, back and forth,
Into all the silly mazes of his mind,
But in the end
He laughed and pointed to my breast,
Where a heart still beat for thee, beloved.

Trumbull Stickney [1874-1904]

IN THE PAST

There lies a somnolent lake
Under a noiseless sky,
Where never the mornings break
Nor the evenings die.

Mad flakes of color
Whirl on its even face
Iridescent and streaked with pallor ;
And, warding the silent place,

The rocks rise sheer and gray
From the sedgeless brink to the sky
Dull-lit with the light of pale half-day
Thro' a void space and dry.

And the hours lag dead in the air
With a sense of coming eternity
To the heart of the lonely boatman there :
That boatman am I,

I, in my lonely boat,
A waif on the somnolent lake,
Watching the colors creep and float
With the sinuous track of a snake.

Now I lean o'er the side
And lazy shades in the water see,
Lapped in the sweep of a sluggish tide
Crawled in from the living sea ;

And next I fix mine eyes,
So long that the heart declines,
On the changeless face of the open skies
Where no star shines ;

And now to the rocks I turn,
To the rocks, around

That lie like walls of a circling urn
Wherein lie bound

The waters that feel my powerless strength
And meet my homeless oar
Laboring over their ashen length
Never to find a shore.

But the gleam still skims
At times on the somnolent lake,
And a light there is that swims
With the whirl of a snake;

And tho' dead be the hours in the air,
And dayless the sky,
The heart is alive of the boatman there !
That boatman am I.

AGE IN YOUTH

From far she 's come, and very old,
And very soiled with wandering.
The dust of seasons she has brought
Unbidden to this field of Spring.

She 's halted at the log-barred gate.
The May-day waits, a tangled spill
Of light that weaves and moves along
The daisied margin of the hill,

Where Nature bares her bridal heart,
And on her snowy soul the sun
Languors desirously and dull,
An amorous pale vermillion.

She 's halted, propped her rigid arms,
With dead big eyes she drinks the west ;
The brown rags hang like clotted dust
About her, save her withered breast.

A very soilure of a dream
Runs in the furrows of her brow,
And with a crazy voice she croons
An ugly catch of long ago.

But look ! Along the molten sky
There runs strange havoc of the sun.
"What a strange sight this is," she says,
"I 'll cross the field, I 'll follow on."

The bars are falling from the gate.
The meshes of the meadow yield ;
And trudging sunsetward she draws
A journey thro' the daisy field.

The daisies shudder at her hem.
Her dry face laughs with flowery light ;
An aureole lifts her soiled gray hair :
"I 'll on," she says, "to see this sight."

In the rude math her torn shoe mows
Juices of trod grass and crushed stalk
Mix with a soiled and earthy dew,
With smear of petals gray as chalk.

The Spring grows sour along her track ;
The winy airs of amethyst
Turn acid. "Just beyond the ledge,"
She says, "I 'll see the sun at rest."

And to the tremor of her croon,
Her old, old catch of long ago,
The newest daisies of the grass
She sheds and passes on below. . . .

The sun is gone where nothing is
And the black-bladed shadows war.
She came and passed, she passed along
That wet, black curve of scimitar.

In vain the flower-lifting morn
With golden fingers to uprear ;
The weak Spring here shall pause awhile :
This is a scar upon the year.

MNE MOSYNE

It 's autumn in the country I remember.

How warm a wind blew here about the ways !
And shadows on the hillside lay to slumber
During the long sun-sweetened summer-days.

It 's cold abroad the country I remember.

The swallows veering skimmed the golden grain
At midday with a wing aslant and limber ;
And yellow cattle browsed upon the plain.

It 's empty down the country I remember.

I had a sister lovely in my sight :
Her hair was dark, her eyes were very sombre ;
We sang together in the woods at night.

It 's lonely in the country I remember.

The babble of our children fills my ears,
And on our hearth I stare the perished ember
To flames that show all starry thro' my tears.

It 's dark about the country I remember.

There are the mountains where I lived. The path
Is slushed with cattle-tracks and fallen timber,
The stumps are twisted by the tempests' wrath.

But that I knew these places are my own,
I 'd ask how came such wretchedness to cumber
The earth, and I to people it alone.

It rains across the country I remember.

LIVE BLINDLY AND UPON THE HOUR

Live blindly and upon the hour. The Lord,
Who was the Future, died full long ago.
Knowledge which is the Past is folly. Go,
Poor child, and be not to thyself abhorred.
Around thine earth sun-wingèd winds do blow
And planets roll ; a meteor draws his sword ;
The rainbow breaks his seven-coloured chord
And the long strips of river-silver flow :
Awake ! Give thyself to the lovely hours.
Drinking their lips, catch thou the dream in flight
About their fragile hairs' aerial gold.
Thou art divine, thou livest, — as of old
Apollo springing naked to the light,
And all his island shivered into flowers.

BE STILL. THE HANGING GARDENS WERE A DREAM

Be still. The Hanging Gardens were a dream
That over Persian roses flew to kiss
The curlèd lashes of Semiramis.
Troy never was, nor green Skamander stream.
Provence and Troubadour are merest lies,

The glorious hair of Venice was a beam
 Made within Titian's eye. The sunsets seem,
 The world is very old and nothing is.
 Be still. Thou foolish thing, thou canst not wake,
 Nor thy tears wedge thy soldered lids apart,
 But patter in the darkness of thy heart.
 Thy brain is plagued. Thou art a frightened owl
 Blind with the light of life thou 'ldst not forsake,
 And error loves and nourishes thy soul.

LEAVE HIM NOW QUIET BY THE WAY

Leave him now quiet by the way
 To rest apart.
 I know what draws him to the dust alway
 And churns him in the builder's lime :
 He has the fright of time.

I heard it knocking in his breast
 A minute since ;
 His human eyes did wince,
 He stubborned like the massive slaughter beast
 And as a thing o'erwhelmed with sound
 Stood bolted to the ground.

Leave him, for rest alone can cure —
 If cure there be —
 This waif upon the sea.
 He is of those who slanted the great door
 And listened — wretched little lad —
 To what they said.

SUNIUM

These are the strings of the Aegean lyre
 Across the sky and sea in glory hung :
 Columns of white thro' which the wind has flung
 The clouds and stars, and drawn the rain and fire.
 Their flutings now to fill the notes' desire
 Are strained and dubious, yet in music young
 They cast their full-blown answer far along
 To where in sea the island hills expire.
 How bravely from the quarry's earthen gloom
 In snow they rose amid the blue to stand
 Melodious and alone on Sunium !
 They shall not wither back into the land.
 The sun that harps them with his golden hand
 Doth slowly with his hand of gold consume.

MT. LYKAION

Alone on Lykaion since man hath been
 Stand on the height two columns, where at rest
 Two eagles hewn of gold sit looking East
 Forever; and the sun goes up between.
 Far down around the mountain's oval green
 An order keeps the falling stones abreast.
 Below within the chaos last and least
 A river like a curl of light is seen.
 Beyond the river lies the even sea,
 Beyond the sea another ghost of sky, —
 O God, support the sickness of my eye
 Lest the far space and long antiquity
 Suck out my heart, and on this awful ground
 The great wind kill my little shell with sound.

NEAR HELIKON

By such an all-embalming summer day
 As sweetens now among the mountain pines
 Down to the cornland yonder and the vines,
 To where the sky and sea are mixed in gray,
 How do all things together take their way
 Harmonious to the harvest, bringing wines
 And bread and light and whatsoe'er combines
 In the large wreath to make it round and gay.
 To me my troubled life doth now appear
 Like scarce distinguishable summits hung
 Around the blue horizon: places where
 Not even a traveller purposeth to steer, —
 Whereof a migrant bird in passing sung,
 And the girl closed her window not to hear.

SIX O'CLOCK

Now burst above the city's cold twilight
 The piercing whistles and the tower-clocks:
 For day is done. Along the frozen docks
 The workmen set their ragged shirts aright.
 Thro' factory doors a stream of dingy light
 Follows the scrimmage as it quickly flocks
 To hut and home among the snow's gray blocks. —
 I love you, human labourers. Good-night!
 Good-night to all the blackened arms that ache!
 Good-night to every sick and sweated brow,

To the poor girl that strength and love forsake,
To the poor boy who can no more! I vow
The victim soon shall shudder at the stake
And fall in blood: we bring him even now.

Amy Lowell

[1874-1925]

EVELYN RAY

No decent man will cross a field
Laid down to hay, until its yield
Is cut and cocked, yet there was the track
Going in from the lane and none coming back.

But that was afterwards; before,
The field was smooth as a sea off shore

On a shimmering afternoon, waist-high
With bent, and red top, and timothy,

Lush with oat grass and tall fescue,
And the purple green of Kentucky blue;

A noble meadow, so broad each way
It took three good scythes to mow in a day.

Just where the field broke into a wood
A knotted old catalpa stood,

And in the old catalpa-tree
A cat-bird sang immoderately.

The sky above him was round and big
And its centre seemed just over his twig.

The earth below him was fresh and fair,
With the sun's long fingers everywhere.

The cat-bird perched where a great leaf hung,
And the great leaf tilted, and flickered, and swung.

The cat-bird sang with a piercing glee
Up in the sun-specked catalpa-tree.

He sang so loud and he sang so long
That his ears were drowned in his own sweet song.

But the little peering leaves of grass
Shook and sundered to let them pass,

To let them pass, the men who heard
Nothing the grass said, nothing the bird.

Each man was still as a shining stone,
Each man's head was a buzzing bone

Wherein two words screeched in and out
Like a grinding saw with its turn about:

"Evelyn Ray," each stone man said,
And the words cut back and forth through his head
And each of them wondered if he were dead.

The cat-bird sang with his head cocked up
Gazing into the sky's blue cup.

The grasses waved back into place,
The sun's long fingers stroked each face,

Each grim, cold face that saw no sun.
And the feet led the faces on and on.

They stopped beside the catalpa-tree,
Said one stone face to the other: "See!"

The other face had nothing to say,
Its lips were frozen on "Evelyn Ray."

They laid their hats in the tall green grass
Where the crickets and grasshoppers pass and pass.

They hung their coats in the crotch of a pine
And paced five feet in an even line.

They measured five paces either way,
And the saws in their head screeched "Evelyn Ray."

The cat-bird sang so loud and clear
He heard nothing at all, there was nothing to hear.

Even the swish of long legs pushing
Through grass had ceased, there was only the hushing

Of a windless wind in the daisy tops,
And the jar stalks make when a grasshopper hops.

Every now and then a bee boomed over
The black-eyed Susans in search of clover,

And crickets shrilled as crickets do:
One — two. One — two.

The cat-bird sang with his head in the air,
And the sun's bright fingers poked here and there,

Past leaf, and branch, and needle, and cone.
But the stone men stood like men of stone.

Each man lifted a dull stone hand
And his fingers felt like weaving sand,

And his feet seemed standing on a ball
Which tossed and turned in a waterfall.

Each man heard a shot somewhere
Dropping out of the distant air.

But the screaming saws no longer said
“Evelyn Ray,” for the men were dead.

* * * * *

I often think of Evelyn Ray.
What did she do, what did she say?
Did she ever chance to pass that way?

I remember it as a lovely spot
Where a cat-bird sang. When he heard the shot,
Did he fly away? I have quite forgot.

When I went there last, he was singing again
Through a little fleeting, misty rain,
And pine-cones lay where they had lain.

This is the tale as I heard it when
I was young from a man who was threescore and ten.
A lady of clay and two stone men.

A pretty problem is here, no doubt,
If you have a fancy to work it out:
What happens to stone when clay is about?

Muse upon it as long as you will,
I think myself it will baffle your skill,
And your answer will be what mine is — nil.

But every sunny Summer's day
I am teased with the thought of Evelyn Ray,
Poor little image of painted clay.
And Heigh-o! I say.
What if there be a judgment-day?

What if all religions be true,
And Gabriel's trumpet blow for you
And blow for them — what will you do?

Evelyn Ray, will you rise alone?
Or will your lovers of dull grey stone
Pace beside you through the wan

Twilight of that bitter day
To be judged as stone and judged as clay,
And no one to say the judgment nay?

Better be nothing, Evelyn Ray,
A handful of buttercups that sway
In the wind for a children's holiday.

For earth to earth is the best we know,
Where the good blind worms push to and fro
Turning us into the seeds which grow,

And lovers and ladies are dead indeed,
Lost in the sap of a flower seed.
Is this, think you, a sorry creed?

Well, be it so, for the world is wide
And opinions jostle on every side.
What has always hidden will always hide.

And every year when the fields are high
With oat grass, and red top, and timothy,
I know that a creed is the shell of a lie.

Peace be with you, Evelyn Ray,
And to your lovers, if so it may,
For earth made stone and earth made clay.

PATTERNS

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whalebone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep ;
For the lime-tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden-paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown !
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword-hilt and the buckles
on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover.
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.

With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon —
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom

In my bosom,

Is a letter I have hid.

It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.

"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."

As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.

"Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.

"No," I told him.

"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.

No, no answer."

And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.

The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.

I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.

In a month, here, underneath this lime,

We would have broke the pattern;

He for me, and I for him,

He as Colonel, I as Lady,

On this shady seat.

He had a whim

That sunlight carried blessing.

And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."

Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk

Up and down

The patterned garden-paths

In my stiff, brocaded gown.

The squills and daffodils

Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.

I shall go
 Up and down,
 In my gown.
 Gorgeously arrayed,
 Boned and stayed.
 And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
 By each button, hook, and lace.
 For the man who should loose me is dead,
 Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
 In a pattern called a war.
 Christ! What are patterns for?

FOUR SIDES TO A HOUSE

Peter, Peter, along the ground,
 Is it wind I hear, or your shoes' sound?
 Peter, Peter, across the air,
 Do dead leaves fall, or is it your hair?
 Peter, Peter, North and South,
 They have stopped your mouth
 With water, Peter.

The long road runs, and the long road runs,
 Who comes over the long road, Peter?
 Who knocks at the door in the cold twilight,
 And begs a heap of straw for the night,
 And a bit of a sup, and a bit of a bite —
 Do you know the face, Peter?

He lays him down on the floor and sleeps.
 Must you wind the clock, Peter?
 It will strike and strike the dark night through.
 He will sleep past one, he will sleep past two,
 But when it strikes three what will he do?
 He will rise and kill you, Peter.

He will open the door to one without.
 Do you hear that voice, Peter?
 Two men prying and poking about,
 Is it here, is it there, is it in, is it out?
 Cover his staring eyes with a clout.
 But you're dead, dead, Peter.

They have ripped up the boards, they have pried up the stones,
 They have found your gold, dead Peter.
 Ripe, red coins to itch a thief's hand,

But you drip ripe red on the floor's white sand,
You burn their eyes like a firebrand.

They must quench you, Peter.

It is dark in the North, it is dark in the South.

The wind blows your white hair, Peter.

One at your feet and one at your head.

A soft bed, a smooth bed,

Scarcely a splash, you sink like lead.

Sweet water in your well, Peter.

Along the road and along the road,

The next house, Peter.

Four-square to the bright and the shade of the moon.

The North winds shuffle, the South winds croon,

Water with white hair over-strewn.

The door, the door, Peter!

Water seeps under the door.

They have risen up in the morning grey.

What will they give to Peter?

The sorrel horse with the tail of gold,

Fastest pacer ever was foaled.

Shoot him, skin him, blanch his bones,

Nail up his skull with a silver nail

Over the door, it will not fail.

No ghostly thing can ever prevail

Against a horse's skull, Peter.

Over the lilacs, gazing down,

Is a window, Peter.

The North winds call, and the South winds cry.

Silver white hair in a bitter blowing,

Eel-green water washing by,

A red mouth floating and flowing.

Do you come, Peter?

They rose as the last star sank and set.

One more for Peter.

They slew the black mare at the flush of the sun,

And nailed her skull to the window-stone.

In the light of the moon how white it shone —

And your breathing mouth, Peter!

Around the house, and around the house,

With a wind that is North, and a wind that is South,

Peter, Peter.

Mud and ooze and a dead man's wrist
Wrenching the shutters apart, like mist
The mud and the ooze and the dead man twist.
They are praying, Peter.

Three in stable a week ago.

This is the last, Peter.

"My strawberry roan in the morning clear,
Lady heart and attentive ear,
Foot like a kitten, nose like a deer,
But the fear! The fear!"

Three skulls, Peter.

The sun goes down, and the night draws in.

Towards the hills, Peter.

What lies so stiff on the hill-room floor,
When the gusty wind claps to the door?
They have paid three horses and two men more.

Gather your gold, Peter.

Softly, softly, along the ground

Lest your shoes sound.

Gently, gently, across the air

Lest it stream, your hair,

North and South

For your aching mouth.

But the moon is old, Peter,

And death is long, and the well is deep.

Can you sleep, sleep, Peter?

Anna Hempstead Branch [1875—

WHERE NO THOUGHTS ARE

When all my will drops from me like a shroud
From the fair dead when they go up on high,
And leaves my soul like sky, blue sky, all sky,
Without a wind or sunshine or the loud
Incessant flitting of the thoughts that crowd
Like swallows to the summer time, then I,
Looking straight upward through myself, descry
A beautiful face more vague than wind or cloud
That from its Heaven searches into mine
And bends to me, even as a star to star.
But if I think, back will the faint clouds roll.

Sometimes I wonder if it be divine —
 If that be God, up there where no thoughts are —
 Or if I see the face of my own soul.

THE WATCH-TOWER OF THE SOUL

In the high watch-tower of the soul
 I tarry all day long.

The days flit by like flocks of birds,
 But not one has a song.

My soul has found no other soul
 To which it does belong.

In this deep loneliness God set
 Each soul as in a shrine.

He bade his virgin she should keep
 Her separate light ashine,
 While others on strange hearths attend
 The flames that are not mine.

When I would speak to them my voice
 Falls from me like a star.

It trails their atmospheres, but not
 The dim worlds where they are.
 Than gulf of time or seas of space
 Our souls are set more far.

My soul is girt in secracies
 Like the petals of a rose.

My breath, which is among them, floats
 On every wind that blows.

They are like sleep around a dream
 There is no one that knows.

Yet that great wind that blows alway
 From heart to heart will rove

Across all spirits and bear up
 Some fragrances above.

I hear some voices that I know,
 Some accents that I love.

I weep because I feel their tears
 Blown in my eyes like rain.

My heart is touched by that which is
 The faint dew of their pain.

I smile because I see them smile,
 And is this all in vain?

Yet when we smile our looks are strange.
The gladness in their eyes
Like a slow dawn is in my heart,
Like a pale light in the skies.
But why they smile or why they weep,
These things are mysteries.

All night I watch from my high tower
The great world come and go.
Their faces flare along the dark
Like wandering stars below.
But who has seen two stars that touch?
And space has said me no.

Though his sweet presence like a light
Is shed about the place,—
My love, to whom I am most near,—
I have not seen his face.
My tears, which are not his, must drop
To reach his heart, through space.

He smiled and folded my two hands
So close upon his breast.
“*These are my doves,*” he said, “*and so*
A little while shall rest.”
But I, who smiled not, felt them grope
Through space — they found no nest.

He smiled and said, “*Thy cheek shall lie*
In my hand, hollowed so!”
But I, who smiled not, felt all time
A wind betwixt us blow.
I leaned my cheek into a void
Of which he did not know.

See they not how alone we are,
Like faint clouds wandering, —
All these who have not felt the breath
Of any living thing?
Do they not know we are alone
That they should dance and sing?

I will be silent in my soul
Since God has girt me round
With His own silences in which
There is no space for sound.
Only His voice perchance may drop
Like dew upon the ground.

I will be silent and will lean
 Myself into all space.
 Love, didst thou think in all this life
 That thou couldst touch my face?
 Nay, for God bade that I should turn
 Unto Himself for grace.

I will be silent, watching so
 Thy love-dawn breaking red,
 ("I thought thy breast should warm mine own
 A little while," he said.
 An we were dead this might be so,
 But, love, we are not dead.)

In the high watch-tower of the soul
 I tarry all day long.
 The days flit by like flocks of birds,
 But not one has a song.
 My soul has found no other soul
 To which it does belong.

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;
 On disarray it lays its wing,
 Teaching simplicity to sing.
 It has a meek and lowly grace,
 Quiet as a nun's face.
 Lo — I will have thee in this place!
 Tranquil well of deep delight,
 All things that shine through thee appear
 As stones through water, sweetly clear.
 Thou clarity,
 That with angelic charity
 Revealest beauty where thou art,
 Spread thyself like a clean pool.
 Then all the things that in thee are,
 Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
 Reflection from serener air —
 Sunken shapes of many a star
 In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.

Truly ye are but seemings —
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flagstone
That my feet have trod upon —
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo!
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be,
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.

There is no small work unto God.
 He required of us greatness;
 Of his least creature
 A high angelic nature,
 Stature superb and bright completeness.
 He sets to us no humble duty.
 Each act that he would have us do
 Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
 Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
 Of his plainest child he asks.
 When I polish the brazen pan
 I hear a creature laugh afar
 In the gardens of a star,
 And from his burning presence run
 Flaming wheels of many a sun.
 Whoever makes a thing more bright,
 He is an angel of all light.
 When I cleanse this earthen floor
 My spirit leaps to see
 Bright garments trailing over it,
 A cleanliness made by me.
 Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
 With labor do I sound Thy praise,
 My work is done for Thee.
 Whoever makes a thing more bright,
 He is an angel of all light.
 Therefore let me spread abroad
 The beautiful cleanliness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
 Angels came and worked with me.
 The air was soft with many a wing.
 They laughed amid my solitude
 And cast bright looks on everything.
 Sweetly of me did they ask
 That they might do my common task.
 And all were beautiful — but one
 With garments whiter than the sun
 Had such a face
 Of deep, remembered grace;
 That when I saw I cried — "Thou art
 The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
 Where have I seen thee?" — And he said,
 "When we are dancing round God's throne,
 How often thou art there.

Beauties from thy hands have flown
 Like white doves wheeling in mid-air.
 Nay — thy soul remembers not?
 Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

Robert Frost [1875 —]

MOWING

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
 And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
 What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
 Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
 Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound —
 And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
 It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
 Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
 Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak
 To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,
 Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
 (Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.
 The fact is the sweetest dream that labour knows.
 My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

REVELATION

We make ourselves a place apart
 Behind light words that tease and flout,
 But oh, the agitated heart
 Till someone find us really out.

'T is pity if the case require
 (Or so we say) that in the end
 We speak the literal to inspire
 The understanding of a friend.

But so with all, from babes that play
 At hide-and-seek to God afar,
 So all who hide too well away
 Must speak and tell us where they are.

THE PASTURE

I 'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I 'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

I 'm going out to fetch the little calf
That 's standing by the mother. It 's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

MENDING WALL

Something there is that does n't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun ;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing :
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill ;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance :
“Stay where you are until our backs are turned !”
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more :
There where it is we do not need the wall :
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, “Good fences make good neighbours.”
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head :
“Why do they make good neighbours? Is n't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I 'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,
 And to whom I was like to give offence.
 Something there is that does n't love a wall,
 That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
 He said it for himself. I see him there
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
 Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
 He will not go behind his father's saying,
 And he likes having thought of it so well
 He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
 Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
 She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
 To meet him in the doorway with the news
 And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
 She pushed him outward with her through the door
 And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
 She took the market things from Warren's arms
 And set them on the porch, then drew him down
 To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
 But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
 "I told him so last haying, did n't I?
 'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
 What good is he? Who else will harbour him
 And his age for the little he can do?
 What help he is there's no depending on.
 Off he goes always when I need him most.
 'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
 Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
 So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
 'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
 Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
 'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
 I should n't mind his bettering himself
 If that was what it was. You can be certain,
 When he begins like that, there's someone at him
 Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
 In haying time, when any help is scarce.
 In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he 'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he 'll have to soon or late."

"He 's worn out. He 's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too —
You need n't smile — I did n't recognise him —
I was n't looking for him — and he 's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he 'd been?"

"He did n't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he 'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you would n't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times — he made me feel so queer —
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson — you remember —
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He 's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you 'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft

On education — you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on.”

“Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot.”

“Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You would n’t think they would. How some things linger !
Harold’s young college boy’s assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathise. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold ’s associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold’s saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it — that an argument !
He said he could n’t make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong —
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay —”

“I know, that ’s Silas’ one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like big birds’ nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He ’s trying to lift, straining to lift himself.”

“He thinks if he could teach him that, he ’d be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different.”

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,

As if she played unheard the tenderness
 That wrought on him beside her in the night.
 "Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
 You need n't be afraid he 'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home
 It all depends on what you mean by home.
 Of course he 's nothing to us, any more
 Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
 Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
 They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
 Something you somehow have n't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
 Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
 And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
 "Silas has better claim on us, you think,
 Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
 As the road winds would bring him to his door.
 Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.
 Why did n't he go there? His brother 's rich,
 A somebody — director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
 I 'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
 To take him in, and might be willing to —
 He may be better than appearances.
 But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
 If he 'd had any pride in claiming kin
 Or anything he looked for from his brother,
 He 'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what 's between them."

"I can tell you.
 Silas is what he is — we would n't mind him —
 But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
 He never did a thing so very bad.
 He don't know why he is n't quite as good
 As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
 To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He would n't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there to-night.
You 'll be surprised at him — how much he 's broken.
His working days are done ; I 'm sure of it."

"I 'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I have n't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is :
He 's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You must n't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I 'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.

Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned — too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

THE MOUNTAIN

The mountain held the town as in a shadow.
I saw so much before I slept there once :
I noticed that I missed stars in the west,
Where its black body cut into the sky.
Near me it seemed : I felt it like a wall
Behind which I was sheltered from a wind.
And yet between the town and it I found,
When I walked forth at dawn to see new things,
Were fields, a river, and beyond, more fields.
The river at the time was fallen away,
And made a widespread brawl on cobble-stones ;
But the signs showed what it had done in spring ;
Good grass-land gullied out, and in the grass
Ridges of sand, and driftwood stripped of bark.
I crossed the river and swung round the mountain.
And there I met a man who moved so slow

With white-faced oxen in a heavy cart,
It seemed no harm to stop him altogether.

"What town is this?" I asked.

"This? Lunenburg."

Then I was wrong: the town of my sojourn,
Beyond the bridge, was not that of the mountain,
But only felt at night its shadowy presence.
"Where is your village? Very far from here?"

"There is no village — only scattered farms.
We were but sixty voters last election.
We can't in nature grow to many more:
That thing takes all the room!" He moved his goad.
The mountain stood there to be pointed at.
Pasture ran up the side a little way,
And then there was a wall of trees with trunks:
After that only tops of trees, and cliffs
Imperfectly concealed among the leaves.
A dry ravine emerged from under boughs
Into the pasture.

"That looks like a path.
Is that the way to reach the top from here? —
Not for this morning, but some other time:
I must be getting back to breakfast now."

"I don't advise your trying from this side.
There is no proper path, but those that have
Been up, I understand, have climbed from Ladd's.
That's five miles back. You can't mistake the place:
They logged it there last winter some way up.
I'd take you, but I'm bound the other way."

"You've never climbed it?"

"I've been on the sides
Deer-hunting and trout-fishing. There's a brook
That starts up on it somewhere — I've heard say
Right on the top, tip-top — a curious thing.
But what would interest you about the brook,
It's always cold in summer, warm in winter.
One of the great sights going is to see
It steam in winter like an ox's breath.
Until the bushes all along its banks
Are inch-deep with the frosty spines and bristles —
You know the kind. Then let the sun shine on it!"

"There ought to be a view around the world
From such a mountain — if it is n't wooded
Clear to the top." I saw through leafy screens
Great granite terraces in sun and shadow,
Shelves one could rest a knee on getting up —
With depths behind him sheer a hundred feet;
Or turn and sit on and look out and down,
With little ferns in crevices at his elbow.

"As to that I can't say. But there's the spring,
Right on the summit, almost like a fountain.
That ought to be worth seeing."

"If it's there.

You never saw it?"

"I guess there's no doubt
About its being there. I never saw it.
It may not be right on the very top:
It would n't have to be a long way down
To have some head of water from above,
And a *good distance* down might not be noticed
By anyone who'd come a long way up.
One time I asked a fellow climbing it
To look and tell me later how it was."

"What did he say?"

"He said there was a lake
Somewhere in Ireland on a mountain top."

"But a lake's different. What about the spring?"

"He never got up high enough to see.
That's why I don't advise your trying this side.
He tried this side. I've always meant to go
And look myself, but you know how it is:
It does n't seem so much to climb a mountain
You've worked around the foot of all your life.
What would I do? Go in my overalls,
With a big stick, the same as when the cows
Have n't come down to the bars at milking time?
Or with a shotgun for a stray black bear?
'T would n't seem real to climb for climbing it."

"I should n't climb it if I did n't want to —
Not for the sake of climbing. What's its name?"

"We call it Hor: I don't know if that's right."

"Can one walk round it? Would it be too far?"

"You can drive round and keep in Lunenburg,
But it's as much as ever you can do,
The boundary lines keep in so close to it.
Hor is the township, and the township's Hor —
And a few houses sprinkled round the foot,
Like boulders broken off the upper cliff,
Rolled out a little farther than the rest."

"Warm in December, cold in June, you say?"

"I don't suppose the water's changed at all.
You and I know enough to know it's warm
Compared with cold, and cold compared with warm.
But all the fun's in how you say a thing."

"You've lived here all your life?"

"Ever since Hor
Was no bigger than a ——" What, I did not hear.
He drew the oxen toward him with light touches
Of his slim goad on nose and offside flank,
Gave them their marching orders, and was moving.

THE WOOD-PILE

Out walking in the frozen swamp one gray day
I paused and said, "I will turn back from here.
No, I will go on farther — and we shall see."
The hard snow held me, save where now and then
One foot went through. The view was all in lines
Straight up and down of tall slim trees
Too much alike to mark or name a place by
So as to say for certain I was here
Or somewhere else: I was just far from home.
A small bird flew before me. He was careful
To put a tree between us when he lighted,
And say no word to tell me who he was
Who was so foolish as to think what *he* thought.
He thought that I was after him for a feather —
The white one in his tail; like one who takes
Everything said as personal to himself.
One flight out sideways would have undeceived him.
And then there was a pile of wood for which
I forgot him and let his little fear
Carry him off the way I might have gone,

Without so much as wishing him good-night.
He went behind it to make his last stand.
It was a cord of maple, cut and split
And piled — and measured, four by four by eight.
And not another like it could I see.
No runner tracks in this year's snow looped near it.
And it was older sure than this year's cutting,
Or even last year's or the year's before.
The wood was gray and the bark warping off it
And the pile somewhat sunken. Clematis
Had wound strings round and round it like a bundle.
What held it though on one side was a tree
Still growing, and on one a stake and prop,
These latter about to fall. I thought that only
Someone who lived in turning to fresh tasks
Could so forget his handiwork on which
He spent himself, the labour of his axe,
And leave it there far from a useful fireplace
To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
With the slow smokeless burning of decay.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him — at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off; — and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man — one man — can't keep a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

HYLA BROOK

By June our brook 's run out of song and speed.
Sought for much after that, it will be found
Either to have gone groping underground
(And taken with it all the Hyla breed
That shouted in the mist a month ago,
Like ghost of sleigh-bells in a ghost of snow) —
Or flourished and come up in jewel-weed,
Weak foliage that is blown upon and bent
Even against the way its waters went.
Its bed is left a faded paper sheet
Of dead leaves stuck together by the heat —
A brook to none but who remember long.
This as it will be seen is other far
Than with brooks taken elsewhere in song.
We love the things we love for what they are.

THE OVEN BIRD

There is a singer everyone has heard,
 Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
 Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
 He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
 Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
 He says the early petal-fall is past
 When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
 On sunny days a moment overcast;
 And comes that other fall we name the fall.
 He says the highway dust is over all.
 The bird would cease and be as other birds
 But that he knows in singing not to sing.
 The question that he frames in all but words
 Is what to make of a diminished thing.

THE HILL WIFE

LONELINESS

(Her Word)

One ought not to have to care
 So much as you and I
 Care when the birds come round the house
 To seem to say good-bye;
 Or care so much when they come back
 With whatever it is they sing;
 The truth being we are as much
 Too glad for the one thing
 As we are too sad for the other here —
 With birds that fill their breasts
 But with each other and themselves
 And their built or driven nests.

HOUSE FEAR

Always — I tell you this they learned —
 Always at night when they returned
 To the lonely house from far away
 To lamps unlighted and fire gone gray,
 They learned to rattle the lock and key
 To give whatever might chance to be
 Warning and time to be off in flight:
 And preferring the out- to the in-door night,
 They learned to leave the house-door wide
 Until they had lit the lamp inside.

THE SMILE

(Her Word)

I did n't like the way he went away.
 That smile! It never came of being gay.
 Still he smiled — did you see him? — I was sure!
 Perhaps because we gave him only bread
 And the wretch knew from that that we were poor.
 Perhaps because he let us give instead
 Of seizing from us as he might have seized.
 Perhaps he mocked at us for being wed,
 Or being very young (and he was pleased
 To have a vision of us old and dead).
 I wonder how far down the road he 's got.
 He 's watching from the woods as like as not.

THE OFT-REPEATED DREAM

She had no saying dark enough
 For the dark pine that kept
 Forever trying the window-latch
 Of the room where they slept.

The tireless but ineffectual hands
 That with every futile pass
 Made the great tree seem as a little bird
 Before the mystery of glass!

It never had been inside the room,
 And only one of the two
 Was afraid in an oft-repeated dream
 Of what the tree might do.

THE IMPULSE

It was too lonely for her there,
 And too wild,
 And since there were but two of them,
 And no child,

And work was little in the house,
 She was free,
 And followed where he furrowed field,
 Or felled tree.

She rested on a log and tossed
 The fresh chips,
 With a song only to herself
 On her lips.

And once she went to break a bough
 Of black alder.
She strayed so far she scarcely heard
 When he called her —

And did n't answer — did n't speak —
 Or return.
She stood, and then she ran and hid
 In the fern.

He never found her, though he looked
 Everywhere,
And he asked at her mother's house
 Was she there.

Sudden and swift and light as that
 The ties gave,
And he learned of finalities
 Besides the grave.

FIRE AND ICE

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I 've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

THE RUNAWAY

Once when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted at us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled,
And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and grey,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow 's afraid of the snow.
He is n't winter-broken. It is n't play
With the little fellow at all. He 's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, 'Sakes,
It 's only weather.' He 'd think she did n't know!
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."

And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
 And mounts the wall again with whitened eyes
 And all his tail that is n't hair up straight.
 He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
 "Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
 When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
 Ought to be told to come and take him in."

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
 His house is in the village though ;
 He will not see me stopping here
 To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
 To stop without a farmhouse near
 Between the woods and frozen lake
 The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
 To ask if there is some mistake.
 The only other sound 's the sweep
 Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
 But I have promises to keep,
 And miles to go before I sleep,
 And miles to go before I sleep.

TO EARTHWARD

Love at the lips was touch
 As sweet as I could bear ;
 And once that seemed too much ;
 I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
 The flow of — was it musk
 From hidden grapevine springs
 Down hill at dusk ?

I had the swirl and ache
 From sprays of honeysuckle
 That when they 're gathered shake
 Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
 Seemed strong when I was young;
 The petal of the rose
 It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
 That is not dashed with pain
 And weariness and fault;
 I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermath
 Of almost too much love,
 The sweet of bitter bark
 And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
 I take away my hand
 From leaning on it hard
 In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
 I long for weight and strength
 To feel the earth as rough
 To all my length.

SPRING POOLS

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
 The total sky almost without defect,
 And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
 Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
 And yet not out by any brook or river,
 But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
 To darken nature and be summer woods —
 Let them think twice before they use their powers
 To blot out and drink up and sweep away
 These flowery waters and these watery flowers
 From snow that melted only yesterday.

ACCEPTANCE

When the spent sun throws up its rays on cloud
 And goes down burning into the gulf below,
 No voice in nature is heard to cry aloud
 At what has happened. Birds, at least, must know
 It is the change to darkness in the sky.

Murmuring something quiet in its breast,
 One bird begins to close a faded eye;
 Or overtaken too far from its nest,
 Hurrying low above the grove, some waif
 Swoops just in time to his remembered tree.
 At most he thinks or twitters softly, "Safe!
 Now let the night be dark for all of me.
 Let the night be too dark for me to see
 Into the future. Let what will be."

ONCE BY THE PACIFIC

The shattered water made a misty din.
 Great waves looked over others coming in,
 And thought of doing something to the shore
 That water never did to land before.
 The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,
 Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.
 You could not tell, and yet it looked as if
 The shore was lucky in being backed by cliff,
 The cliff in being backed by continent;
 It looked as if a night of dark intent
 Was coming, and not only a night, an age.
 Someone had better be prepared for rage.
 There would be more than ocean-water broken
 Before God's last *Put out the Light* was spoken.

A WINTER EDEN

A winter garden in an alder swamp,
 Where conies now come out to sun and romp,
 As near a paradise as it can be
 And not melt snow or start a dormant tree.

It lifts existence on a plane of snow
 One level higher than the earth below,
 One level nearer heaven overhead,
 And last year's berries shining scarlet red.

It lifts a gaunt luxuriating beast
 Where he can stretch and hold his highest feast
 On some wild apple tree's young tender bark,
 What well may prove the year's high girdle mark.

So near to paradise all pairing ends:
 Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends,
 Content with bud-inspecting. They presume
 To say which buds are leaf and which are bloom.

A feather-hammer gives a double knock.
 This Eden day is done at two o'clock.
 An hour of winter day might seem too short
 To make it worth life's while to wake and sport.

William Ellery Leonard [1876-

FROM "TWO LIVES"

I

"His wife not dead a month — and there he sits,
 Heartless and doubtless happy": so they said
 Who at the game between the Gold and Red
 Remarked me. — Meantime bases, bats, and mitts,
 Pitchers and fielders, flags and fouls and hits
 (When up the sky careered the shining ball),
 The runners diving in the dust, and all,
 Made one blurred nightmare. By my sober wits,
 'T was "most indecorous" that there I sat,
 My wife not dead a month! — Did I not know
 The use of crepe, the etiquette of woe?
 Yes; but I 'd business more severe than that:
 Knowing how hungrily Death leered for me,
 I seized on life wherever it might be.

II

Three months with clenched fists and thin bitten lips,
 With head thrown back on walks from street to street —
 Meaningless highways built for others' feet,
 For others' aims — under the silent whips
 Of mine own will upon my neck and hips,
 Till in the suburbs the midsummer heat
 Ripened the roadside corn and fencèd wheat;
 Three months of iron-souled companionships
 In talks too calm for safety, — till the strain
 Cracked to the centre, cracked across the grain
 The splintering life of nerve and heart. I fell. . . .
 They said that I was dying in the dell
 (They said it chiefly who were chiefly fain). . . .
 O dear green cottage with the windowed ell!

III

Soft midland cottage with the little brook,
 In thee indeed had been my place to die —

With the like sound of waters murmuring by
 As when in boyhood I would lean and look
 At shining minnows darting past a stone ;
 Under thy eaves, with those who had beguiled
 My infant griefs now tending the man prone,
 Had been my place to die, again a child :
 As one who, having steered by capes and bars,
 Seen many cities, warred with many a breast,
 Comes, full of fearful memories and scars,
 Back to his island and his native rest. —
 In thee had been the place, save that I knew
 I had this tale to tell, this task to do.

IV

Death hath two hands to slay with : with the one
 He stabs the loveliness of Yesterday,
 Till all its gold and blue is sodden gray
 To memory forever, in the sun :
 Think ye I think upon our earliest kiss,
 Our walks, our vines, our readings, as I would
 Were she still by me in her womanhood
 To join in tender talk on all of this ?
 Death hath two hands to slay with : with the other
 He stabs the glory of our bright Tomorrow —
 Our best reality, our younger brother,
 Our spirit-self — upon the fields of sorrow :
 Think ye he took no unbuilt house from me,
 No unsailed voyage with her across the sea ?

V

Lone walks and lonelier midnights come to half
 Of all who ever loved : that half on whom
 Time levies the unchanging tax of doom
 For what Time lent us when we used to laugh
 In the proud arms of love : that grim remainder,
 Heroes of desolation after mirth,
 O they are many-numbered on the earth,
 And manfully they pay without attainder.
 The half that walks no more, that wakes no more,
 The many-numbered of the coffined folk,
 Know naught, know naught of us, know naught thereof ;
 And we must bear, with laboring backs and sore,
 And broken knees, through life Love's iron yoke —
 Without support, without support of Love.

VI

Some observations touching speech and grief :
After her death of horror, being still
A man of reason with some shreds of will,
I sought among my friends a grim relief
By telling forth, as one who knew in chief,
The story so immediate. No thrill,
No tears: ‘the poison that she drank to kill
Was so and so.’ — Bare fact, you see, and brief.
Three months — and I collapsed — but not in mind ;
And in that woodland house imprisonèd,
Too weak to walk, I wrote with bleeding pen
The thousand tender memories left behind —
What I had done for her, what she had said —
In random jottings over and over again.

VII

How little do they know of sorrow, they
Who in the early months of death and dust
In vain commiseration feel they must
Guide their friend’s thoughts from what has passed away,
So torturingly fearful lest they say
Aught to remind. — Aught to remind of death ! —
As if with every pulse, with every breath,
Death were not talking to him night and day !
But then, when time has led him by the hand
Some kindly footsteps from the grave, and he
Begins at last to look about the land,
Then, witless of the subtle irony,
They name old things and torture him again,
Raking to fire the buried coals in brain.

VIII

Thrice summer and autumn passed into the west,
Across her grave with flower and leaf they passed,
Thrice winter with his moon. Now spring at last —
The fatal spring of her supreme unrest
And ultimate hour — its green young feet hath pressed
Once more on hills and fields and brought to us
From southern oceans small birds amorous
To build in trees of song the happy nest
Above her grave. . . . And meanwhile in the world
Fire, flood, and whirlwind smote the planted ground,
And ships with lights and music sank at sea,

And flags o'er new-born nations were unfurled,
And men discovered, as the earth went round,
New stars off yonder in eternity.

IX

Three years have passed of man's mortality, —
Save for those first strange months, three speechless years,
Speechless (in all things touching her) for me.
But I've debated, mastering agony,
At club, in hall, in household, with my peers, —
The statesmen, scholars, poets, engineers, —
On divers issues: art, society,
Science, and conduct. I have dried the tears
Of others' children sitting on my knee,
By cutting quaintly with the mother's shears
Lank beasts and yokels. I have earned my fee
Duly by sundry books men read and quote.
I've dined and jested. I have cast my vote.

X

And now on lonely walks by hill and lake
Her phantom clasps my hand; her voice is near:
"O wait a minute! what's the bird we hear?" . . .
"Let's pull this watercress. I love to make
Crisp salads from the brook." . . . "Come home and rake
The leaves from off the pansy-bed" . . . and fear
Seizes me: for those voices are too dear,
Are still too dear and terrible, and break
The strength I've won. And yet night after night
(Whatever of else I will to read or write),
The wish to save for others that sweet heart,
Despite the edict of the tomb, despite
The expense of pain for me, with solemn might
Compels me to my record and my art.

XI

I will not fear myself, will not fear truth,
And here shall be arraignment without stint.
I will hold court against my sinful youth,
And all the findings shall be checked in print.
"Item: you fostered a bastard Love-of-fame
Begot on Vanity when still a lad, —
What if you saw the creature going lame? —
What if — when the dear wife was going mad!

What was the peril of Ambition's goal
 (Self feeding self, when all is understood),
 Against the peril of a human soul,
 And that the soul you loved, or said you would?
 You have your full reward: the wife is dead —
 And your ambition be upon your head.

XII

"Item: you would not meet the issue face
 To questioning face: you paltered, eyes astrife
 With each mere moment, would not see its place
 With years and the enduring laws of life;
 And when betimes that Reason which you boast
 Did chart some hint of larger meanings there,
 Did it, like pilot off a storm-beat coast,
 Devise and act to steer you anywhere?
 No. But, astrut, like smug Tragedian,
 You mouthed high sentences, and satisfied
 Your sense of things-awry, your heart-of-man,
 With analytic, passion, gesture, pride.
 You have your full reward: the wife is dead —
 And all your rhetoric be upon your head.

XIII

"Item: not only a bastard Hamlet, — nay,
 Arch-Egoist: your triple pride-of-head
 (Itself not purest metal) you did lay
 On scale, like Troy-weight vilely plugged with lead,
 Wherewith the merit of her gold to weigh.
 This was your brooding wrath, when all is said:
 'I 'm being used — I won't be used, I say':
 That you, precisely you, should thus be bled —
 That galled the most. And, true or false, that thought
 Voided its poison — where! On her, on her —
 The meek and unsuspecting sufferer,
 When Love would 'use you' and you had forgot!
 You have your full reward: the wife is slain —
 And you for her will not be 'used' again.

XIV

"Item: for fret and wrath and panic-fear
 And sullen mood, too little now it serves
 To plead extenuation of sick nerves,
 When the remorseless question lies so near:

'Did the sick nerves owe nothing to the fret,
 The wrath, the panic-fear, the sullen mood?'
 Was there not inward strength and mastery yet,
 Save as you sapped it in fool-hardihood —
 Until indeed 't was gone? Now having known
 Collapse indeed, have you not often sighed
 (And more than sighed) that energy to own
 You squandered in vain outbursts ere she died?
 You have your full reward: the wife is dead,
 And your fool's folly be upon your head."

XV

Such the arraignment, and I answer not;
 My guilt be on my head, without all end.
 What thwarts self-knowledge toward my own misthought,
 My own misdeeds, is not self-pity, friend,
 Nor self-esteem. But when from roundabout
 (Ere one can find himself and his true sin)
 Charges and maledictions seek him out,
 They so distemper all the man within,
 That soon defiance of a base-born lie
 Becomes defiance of truth on base-born tongue,
 And then defiance of truth, however high,
 Of truth itself, though by an angel sung.
 Feeling myself less base than some have said,
 I've made myself all innocence instead.

XVI

As in old dungeon under marble thrones,
 Under old marble floors where walked a queen,
 O deeply under in the slime and green —
 If that were slime upon those ghastly stones,
 If that were green upon the skulls and bones
 In vagrom moonlight through the bars revealed —
 The courtier beat upon a rusty shield
 And sang, to stave off madness, antic tones,
 Which wayfarers along the castle steep
 Heard as they crossed the shadows of the pines,
 And deemed some drunken clown among the wines
 In the cellarage, too strange of wit to weep,
 And, well remembering his eery laughter,
 Mimicked for tavern cronies ever after:

XVII

So I from that black pool whereinto Hell
 That slew my bride, and Slander, Hell's first-born,
 That would have slain the husband (but for scorn —
 Which was my strength!) had cast me, there to dwell
 Far under Life, the queenly and the well,
 Far under Life, to balk my agonies
 Thrummed English rhymes from Aristophanes,
 Jest upon jest . . . that now friends read or tell
 In scholar-evenings by the winter hearth
 (Whilst Greek *Birds* twitter to the *Frogs'* refrain);
 And I, who walk sometimes in sun again,
 Think to myself: "I've multiplied for earth,
 Even from the poisoned springs of utter pain,
 Somewhat the goodly medicine of mirth."

XVIII

When, midst their panic at our Loveliest
 Self-slaughtered near her blossomed cherry tree,
 Her kin and neighbors wildly smote at me
 As cause and curse, then came my friends and pressed:
 "In every house sits Slander as a guest,
 And will depart not soon; you can but be
 Scorned into isolation in this city, — flee
 Forever forth, and leave with time the rest."
 To which I said: "For *grief* I might have fled,
 For grief and torture of old hill and street
 And sunset waters; but, though she be dead,
 Her husband's manhood lives on rugged feet
 With which he stood on sun-scorched pyramid
 And stormy Alps. And here I stay." . . . I did.

XIX

I did . . . was 't worth the pain? . . . for pain was long,
 Long on the cliffs of Slander, and most bleak
 It was to stand so long, when long so weak
 With sorrow and the wounds of earlier Wrong.
 Was it worth the pain? — What mattered it what they
 Or thought or said? As stranger had I come;
 Should I not then, all silently and dumb,
 Have, as a stranger, stolen me away? —
 Were there no island-haunts by Naples' bay,
 Nor yet no mountains off in Thessaly,
 No lights in giddy Paris? . . . "Here I stay" —
 And it indeed was worth the pain to me:

Not that their slander mattered, but that I
Would prove to self I'd stand my ground or die.

xx

And yet all this were challenge to be strong,
And exercise of valor, for high days
That lie beyond the mountains of dispraise
And torture: but to this, a monstrous Wrong
Comes, with its demon tentacles, along
And clutches me forever, and divides
(And O how easy were all ills besides !)
My soul from courage and my lips from song.
This Wrong is Terror. Ye have heard the name;
Ye never knew the thing: It has no cave
Under the night-hills or the yellow wave,
Nor dwells not in the earthquake or the flame.
No, no, within my breast, it feeds, it sleeps;
And when 't is plenished, forth it leaps, it leaps.

xxi

Let me enlighten. 'T is no metaphor —
My poet-youth is gone with all the foam
And spindrift of the seas I used to roam.
Let me enlighten. Deep within the core
Of consciousness there lurks forevermore
In man Primeval Fear, a heritage
From pricked-up Ears and scurrying Feet in age
Of olden alien beasts of cliff and shore.
It lurks unknown, but let man's mind (so free,
So full of gracious fancies, hopes, and jest
In this the quiet latter world) once be
Jarred to the center, 't will rise manifest;
And take by thousands phobic shape and twist —
Unexorcised by tongue, or eye, or fist.

xxii

Yet it forewarns you all. If once ye 'll con
With inward-peering eye your house of mind,
Mastering unscathed the Gnothi Seauton,
Some shivery bugaboo each one shall find
In corner where the lights burn blue and thick.
For now at this, and now at that ye shy,
With secret shame, ye folk, unknowing why,
And call your perturbation, "notion," "trick":
Some dread all cats or dogs, and some a crowd,

Some dread lest foolishly they scream aloud,
 Some dread a knife, a tower, a waterfall; —
 Small Pesterings of thought that come and go —
 Yet spawned by Her, the Aboriginal,
 The Terror that I tell you lurks below.

XXIII

What is it like (you ask perplexed), this fear? —
 Fancy yourself compelled to walk a plank
 From cliff to lofty cliff with reeling shank;
 Fancy yourself a swimmer, in the rear
 Of some white ship that nevermore draws near;
 Fancy yourself entangled in the dank
 Morasses, with the elephants that sank,
 As sole companions, save the moon's half-sphere —
 'T is like such times. The safe bright world of tree
 And dell and house is round me where I roam,
 But so estranged, through what 's estranged in me,
 That it seems horribly no more my home. . . .
 In mood, the lost, the panic-stricken child;
 In intellect, the man, from joy exiled.

XXIV

But Terror's widened bane has been to me
 More than all terror, whispering at my right
 Whispers of *her* by day, and O by night
 Close at my left whispering so fearfully
 The story of *her* anguish. An iron key
 Did Terror force into my hand, whereby
 Perforce I did unlock for mine own eye
 The torture-chambers of the mind where *she*
 In her last months lay prone. And *my* strange spells
 Became interpretation of the Hells
 That *she* had suffered; and I suffered thus
 (And sometimes still) her suffering with my own,
 Suffered her suffering even as *she* lay prone
 In those last months. And still do I discuss

XXV

At times with self (when self is gripped anew
 By Terror and its imps of ghoulish play):
 "Is there not fate in this? — Must I not too,
 Now knowing in *myself* what *she* went through,
 End, when my hour is come, the self-same way?" —
 And that Suggestion is of voice and hue,

Of hollowest voice and most unearthly hue
 And chief of Terrors, every first of May.
 Yet Reason smiles and answers : " Twixt ye twain,
 Though *one* by love and later *one* by pain,
 The bonds of fate are loosened : Neither could,
 Nor love nor suffering, make ye one in brain ;
 For in *her* spirit was my speech in vain,
 In *yours* it watches every alien mood."

XXVI

Under the trees I sat, under the blue
 Midsummer morning ; under the quiet trees,
 Under the twilight, under the little breeze
 That scarcely dipped along the hillside dew ;
 Day after day I sat, to hear some few
 Whisperings of the Comforter, and these
 My words, with hands clasping my folded knees :
 " Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."
 My heart, my broken heart, was ready, ready
 My utmost soul (that might no longer talk),
 Ready for God, still as a leaf grown steady
 After the tempest on a shivered stalk :
 I made God's test, in all good faith I made it ; —
 Is there a God ? — if so, then he betrayed it.

XXVII

I made the test in God's own Laboratory
 (If sages speak the truth), with each appliance
 Perfect in its adjustment ; and my Science
 Showed no results : there shone no inward glory,
 There flooded me no dominant control,
 No truth, no peace that passeth understanding ;
 Until at last, as ship that makes its landing,
 I anchored on its native shore my soul,
 Knowing this, this : for *me* no Comforter
 From Otherwhere, for *me* salvation none,
 Save such as by stern action might be won
 Among things round me ; I said : " It horror were
 In *such* a world, were Foresight at the wheel" —
 I said : " Ich lass den Herrgott aus dem Spiel."

XXVIII

I *could* not have beat back my way to life,
 Inch after inch, with lacerated shins,

Through thorns and rocks, whilst mocked the Harlequins,
 The monstrous midnight shapes of dancing Strife,
 Had I still thought, "The Lord is lord of all." —
 'T had been too ghastly; but I got good grip
 On savior-energy of sportsmanship,
 And heard far off Humanity to call
 Me to its service. Thus I *would* not die.
 And trained the shattered body back to speed,
 And back to strength. (Run with me, if you will,
 Young athletes — I 'll outstrip you to the hill !) —
 And trained the mind still forward to the High,
 The Keen, the Firm ! (And let who should, take heed !)

XXIX

Ere this, had I abandoned holy house
 Of Holy Church, with organ, cross, and book, —
 As some dim cob-webbed hunting-lodge forsook
 Not yet of bat and wasp, though of the mouse
 And eager hound; and now that mystic Union
 With Love Divine, as Brahma, Logos, God, —
 Preached by the prophets of a World-communion —
 Failed me the same, whatever path I trod,
 Whatever tree I sate me by. . . . I guess
 Ye grieve at such conclusion, saying: "So,
 In vain he suffered all the long distress,
 For vain his wisdom from his overthrow." —
 Spare me (who 've been with life) such platitude —
 Even I have spelt new meanings for my good,

XXX

Like one who solves some curious alphabet
 Upon a desert stele. . . . But perhaps
 I am too near the tempests of collapse
 To tongue their awful intimacies yet
 For the articulate world. . . . And if *I* grow
 By suffering, where is she? . . . And shall we meet
 Somewhere again along the Cosmic Flow,
 I and the woman of the winding-sheet? —
 All proofs and guesses of ten thousand years
 Never have dried one orphaned heart its tears:
 I have no proof and but a shadow-guess,
 And yet I 've never wept. . . . But should we meet,
 Would *she* still know me after my distress,
 Would *I* still find the words wherewith to greet?

XXXI

Like one who solves some curious alphabet
 On desert stele . . . and then solves a word . . .
 Though the God's whispering I never heard,
 And though my eyes were cruelly unwet
 (Harshly encountering so much to do),
 I know how ineradicably absurd
 That Man is but a function of the Two,
 Physics and Chemistry — that we can spell
 By atom and motion (or by twitch and cell)
 The ineffable Adventure I 've been through. . . .
 I know Love, Pain, and Power are spirit-things,
 My Act a more than Mine or Now or Near:
 One with the Will that suffers, conquers, sings,
I was the mystic Voice I could not hear.

XXXII

That once the gentle mind of my dead wife
 Did love that fiery Roman (dead like her) —
 Lucretius and his vast hexameter —
 I number with the ironies of life.
 That I, who turned his Latian verse to mine
 For her, the while she typed each page for me,
 Should, in my English, just have reached that line
 Fourth from the end of the Book of Death (Book Three),
 When Death rode out for her — was that design? —
 If so, of God or Devil? — the line which saith,
 “*O Mors aeterna — O eternal Death*” —
 The last, last letters she fingered key by key! . . .
 But when, long after, I had wrought the rest,
 I said these verses, walking down the west :

XXXIII

INDIAN SUMMER

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
 She is not by, to know my task is done!*)

In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
 Lone as a lad whose dog 's no longer near,
 Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned,
 Lone on the loved hill . . . and below me here
 The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
 Along red clusters of the sumach streams;

The shriveled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
 And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
 (. . . forever . . . forever . . . forever . . .)
 This is the lonely season of the year,
 This is the season of our lonely dreams.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the setting Sun,
 She is not by, to know my task is done!)*

The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
 Show like an Indian village of dead days;
 The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
 And floats atop the distant woods ablaze
 With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
 Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
 Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
 Await yon full-moon of the night-to-be.
 (. . . far . . . and far . . . and far . . .)
 These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
 These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
 She is not by to know my task is done!)*

And this the hill she visited, as friend;
 And this the hill she lingered on, as bride —
 Down in the yellow valley is the end:
 They laid her . . . in no evening Autumn tide. . . .
 Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
 The queens and cave-women of ancient earth. . . .

This is the hill . . . and over my city's towers,
 Across the world from sunset, yonder in air,
 Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
 Of piled masonry, which shall be ours
 To give, completed, to our children there. . . .
 And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
 Shall house new laughter. . . . Yet I tried. . . . I tried. . . .
 And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
 I built her many a fire for love . . . for mirth. . . .
 (When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
 Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . .
 (. . . farewell . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .)
 We dare not think too long on those who died,
 While still so many yet must come to birth.

Carl Sandburg

[1878-]

CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,
 Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
 Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
 Stormy, husky, brawling,
 City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen
 your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
 And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I
 have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of
 women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
 And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at
 this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
 Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud
 to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a
 tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
 Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage
 pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,
 Shoveling,
 Wrecking,
 Planning,
 Building, breaking, rebuilding.

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white
 teeth,
 Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man
 laughs,
 Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a
 battle,
 Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under
 his ribs the heart of the people,
 Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-
 naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker,
 Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler
 to the Nation.

LOST

Desolate and lone
 All night long on the lake
 Where fog trails and mist creeps,

The whistle of a boat
 Calls and cries unendingly,
 Like some lost child
 In tears and trouble
 Hunting the harbour's breast
 And the harbour's eyes.

FISH CRIER

I know a Jew fish crier down on Maxwell Street, with a voice like
 a north wind blowing over corn stubble in January.
 He dangles herring before prospective customers evincing a joy
 identical with that of Pavlova dancing.
 His face is that of a man terribly glad to be selling fish, terribly
 glad that God made fish, and customers to whom he may call
 his wares from a pushcart.

CUMULATIVES

Storms have beaten on this point of land
 And ships gone to wreck here
 and the passers-by remember it
 with talk on the deck at night
 as they near it.

Fists have beaten on the face of this old prize-fighter
 And his battles have held the sporting pages
 and on the street they indicate him with their
 right forefinger as one who once wore
 a championship belt.

A hundred stories have been published and a thousand rumoured
 About why this tall dark man has divorced two beautiful young
 women
 And married a third who resembles the first two
 and they shake their heads and say, 'There he goes,'
 when he passes in sunny weather or in rain
 along the city streets.

FOG

The fog comes
 on little cat feet.

It sits looking
 over harbour and city
 on silent haunches
 and then moves on.

EARLY MOON

The baby moon, a canoe, a silver papoose canoe, sails and sails in
the Indian west.

A ring of silver foxes, a mist of silver foxes, sit and sit around the
Indian moon.

One yellow star for a runner, and rows of blue stars for more runners,
keep a line of watchers.

O foxes, baby moon, runners, you are the panel of memory, fire-
white writing to-night of the Red Man's dreams.

Who squats, legs crossed and arms folded, matching its look
against the moon-face, the star-faces, of the West?

Who are the Mississippi Valley ghosts, of copper foreheads, riding
wiry ponies in the night? — no bridles, love-arms on the
pony necks, riding in the night a long old trail?

Why do they always come back when the silver foxes sit around the
early moon, a silver papoose, in the Indian west?

LAUGHING CORN

There was a high majestic fooling
Day before yesterday in the yellow corn.

And day after to-morrow in the yellow corn
There will be high majestic fooling.

The ears ripen in late summer
And come on with a conquering laughter,
Come on with a high and conquering laughter.

The long-tailed blackbirds are hoarse.
One of the smaller blackbirds chitters on a stalk
And a spot of red is on its shoulder
And I never heard its name in my life.

Some of the ears are bursting.
A white juice works inside.
Cornsilk creeps in the end and dangles in the wind.
Always — I never knew it any other way —
The wind and the corn talk things over together.
And the rain and corn and the sun and the corn
Talk things over together.

Over the road is the farmhouse.
The siding is white and a green blind is slung loose.
It will not be fixed till the corn is husked.
The farmer and his wife talk things over together.

**PSALM OF THOSE WHO GO FORTH
BEFORE DAYLIGHT**

The policeman buys shoes slow and careful; the teamster buys gloves slow and careful; they take care of their feet and hands; they live on their feet and hands.

The milkman never argues; he works alone and no one speaks to him; the city is asleep when he is on the job; he puts a bottle on six hundred porches and calls it a day's work; he climbs two hundred wooden stairways; two horses are company for him; he never argues.

The rolling-mill men and the sheet-steel men are brothers of cinders; they empty cinders out of their shoes after the day's work; they ask their wives to fix burnt holes in the knees of their trousers; their necks and ears are covered with a smut; they scour their necks and ears, they are brothers of cinders.

HORSES AND MEN IN RAIN

Let us sit by a hissing steam radiator a winter's day, grey wind pattering frozen raindrops on the window,
And let us talk about milk wagon drivers and grocery delivery boys.

Let us keep our feet in wool slippers and mix hot punches — and talk about mail carriers and messenger boys slipping along the icy sidewalks.

Let us write of olden, golden days and hunters of the Holy Grail and men called 'knights' riding horses in the rain, in the cold frozen rain for ladies they loved.

A roustabout hunched on a coal wagon goes by, icicles drip on his hat rim, sheets of ice wrapping the hunks of coal, the caravan-serai a grey blur in slant of rain.

Let us nudge the steam radiator with our wool slippers and write poems of Launcelot, the hero, and Roland, the hero, and all the olden golden men who rode horses in the rain.

FLAT LANDS

Flat lands on the end of town where real estate men are crying new subdivisions,

The sunsets pour blood and fire over you hundreds and hundreds of nights, flat lands — blood and fire of sunsets thousands of years have been pouring over you.

And the stars follow the sunsets. One gold star. A shower of blue stars. Blurs of white and grey stars. Vast marching

processions of stars arching over you flat lands where frogs sob this April night.

'Lots for Sale — Easy Terms' run letters painted on a board — and the stars wheel onward, the frogs sob this April night.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shovelled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.

Shovel them under and let me work —

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg

And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.

Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

THE LAWYERS KNOW TOO MUCH

The lawyers, Bob, know too much.

They are chums of the books of old John Marshall.

They know it all, what a dead hand wrote,

A stiff dead hand and its knuckles crumbling,

The bones of the fingers a thin white ash.

The lawyers know

a dead man's thoughts too well.

In the heels of the higgling lawyers, Bob,
 Too many slippery ifs and buts and howevers,
 Too much hereinbefore provided whereas,
 Too many doors to go in and out of.

When the lawyers are through
 What is there left, Bob?
 Can a mouse nibble at it
 And find enough to fasten a tooth in?

Why is there always a secret singing
 When a lawyer cashes in?
 Why does a hearse horse snicker
 Hauling a lawyer away?

The work of a bricklayer goes to the blue.
 The knack of a mason outlasts a moon.
 The hands of a plasterer hold a room together.
 The land of a farmer wishes him back again.
 Singers of songs and dreamers of plays
 Build a house no wind blows over.
 The lawyers — tell me why a hearse horse snickers hauling a law-
 yer's bones.

B A S - R E L I E F

Five geese deploy mysteriously.
 Onward proudly with flagstaffs,
 Hearses with silver bugles,
 Bushels of plum-blossoms dropping
 For ten mystic web-feet —
 Each his own drum-major,
 Each charged with the honour
 Of the ancient goose nation,
 Each with a nose-length surpassing
 The nose-lengths of rival nations,
 Sombrelly, slowly, unimpeachably,
 Five geese deploy mysteriously.

THREE SPRING NOTATIONS ON BIPEDS

I

The down drop of the blackbird,
 The wing catch of arrested flight,
 The stop midway and then off :
 off for triangles, circles, loops of new hieroglyphs—
 This is April's way : a woman :
 "O yes, I 'm here again and your heart knows I was coming."

II

White pigeons rush at the sun,
A marathon of wing feats is on:

"Who most loves danger? Who most loves wings? Who somersaults for God's sake in the name of wing power on an April Thursday."

So ten winged heads, ten winged feet, race their white forms over Elmhurst.

They go fast: once the ten together were a feather of foam bubble, a chrysanthemum whirl speaking to silver and azure.

III

The child is on my shoulders.

In the prairie moonlight the child's legs hang over my shoulders.

She sits on my neck and I hear her calling me a good horse.

She slides down — and into the moon silver of a prairie stream

She throws a stone and laughs at the clug-clug.

WHIFFS OF THE OHIO RIVER AT CINCINNATI

I

A young thing in spring green slippers, stockings, silk vivid as lilac-time grass,

And a red line of a flaunt of fresh silk again up under her chin — She slipped along the street at half-past six in the evening, came out of the stairway where her street address is, where she has a telephone number —

Just a couple of blocks from the street next to the Ohio river, where men sit in chairs tipped back, watching the evening lights on the water of the Ohio river —

She started out for the evening, dark brown calf eyes, roaming and hunted eyes,

And her young wild ways were not so young any more, nor so wild.

Another evening primrose stood in a stairway, with a white knit sweater fitting her shoulders and ribs close.

She asked a young ballplayer passing for a few kind words and a pleasant look — and he slouched up to her like an umpire calling a runner out at the home plate — he gave her a few words and passed on.

She had bells on, she was jingling, and yet — her young wild ways were not so young any more, nor so wild.

II

When I asked for fish in the restaurant facing the Ohio river, with fish signs and fish pictures all over the wooden, crooked frame of

the fish shack, the young man said, "Come around next Friday — the fish is all gone today."

So, I took eggs, fried, straight up, one side, and he murmured, humming, looking out at the shining breast of the Ohio river, "And the next is something else; and the next is something else."

The customer next was a hoarse roustabout, handling nail kegs on a steamboat all day, asking for three eggs, sunny side up, three, nothing less, shake us a mean pan of eggs.

And while we sat eating eggs, looking at the shining breast of the Ohio river in the evening lights, he had his thoughts and I had mine thinking how the French who found the Ohio river named it La Belle Riviere meaning a woman easy to look at.

THE OLD FLAGMAN

The old flagman has great-grand-children.

Ruddy as a hard nut, hair in his ears, clear sea lights in his eyes,
He goes out of his shanty and lifts a sign: Stop.

"Y 'see where the sign is dented?
I hit a fellah over the head with it,
The only way to stop him gettin' run over.
They want to get killed; I have to stop 'em.
That 's my job."

He was twenty years a policeman in Chicago.

"I carry a bullet in my guts an I got an abscess in my gall bladder —
I picked this shanty for a rest.
I go slow and careful; I got a leak in the heart; if
I laugh too hard my heart stops — and I fall down;
I have to watch myself."

A third rail car hoots up the line.

He goes out with a warning in his hand: Stop.
"These damn fools, they want to get under the wheels.
I have to stop 'em."

Ruddy as a hard nut, hair in his ears, clear sea lights in his eyes.

FOOLISH ABOUT WINDOWS

I was foolish about windows.

The house was an old one and the windows were small.
I asked a carpenter to come and open the walls and put in bigger
windows.

"The bigger the window the more it costs," he said.

"The bigger the cheaper," I said.

So he tore off siding and plaster and laths
And put in a big window and bigger windows.
I was hungry for windows.

One neighbor said, "If you keep on you 'll be able to see everything
there is."

I answered, "That 'll be all right, that 'll be classy enough for me."

Another neighbor said, "Pretty soon your house will be all win-
dows."

And I said, "Who would the joke be on then?"

And still another, "Those who live in glass houses gather no moss."

And I said, "Birds of a feather should not throw stones and a soft
answer turneth away rats."

Vachel Lindsay [1879-1931]

ON THE BUILDING OF SPRINGFIELD

Let not our town be large, remembering
That little Athens was the Muses' home,
That Oxford rules the heart of London still,
That Florence gave the Renaissance to Rome.

Record it for the grandson of your son —
A city is not builded in a day:
Our little town cannot complete her soul
Till countless generations pass away.

Now let each child be joined as to a church
To her perpetual hopes, each man ordained:
Let every street be made a reverent aisle
Where Music grows and Beauty is unchained.

Let Science and Machinery and Trade
Be slaves of her, and make her all in all,
Building against our blatant, restless time
An unseen, skilful, medieval wall.

Let every citizen be rich toward God.
Let Christ the beggar, teach divinity.
Let no man rule who holds his money dear.
Let this, our city, be our luxury.

We should build parks that students from afar
Would choose to starve in, rather than go home,

Fair little squares, with Phidian ornament,
Food for the spirit, milk and honeycomb.

Songs shall be sung by us in that good day,
Songs we have written, blood within the rhyme
Beating, as when Old England still was glad,—
The purple, rich Elizabethan time.

• • • • •

Say, is my prophecy too fair and far?
I only know, unless her faith be high,
The soul of this, our Nineveh, is doomed,
Our little Babylon will surely die.

Some city on the breast of Illinois
No wiser and no better at the start
By faith shall rise redeemed, by faith shall rise
Bearing the western glory in her heart.

The genius of the Maple, Elm and Oak,
The secret hidden in each grain of corn,
The glory that the prairie angels sing
At night when sons of Life and Love are born,

Born but to struggle, squalid and alone,
Broken and wandering in their early years.
When will they make our dusty streets their goal,
Within our attics hide their sacred tears?

When will they start our vulgar blood athrill
With living language, words that set us free?
When will they make a path of beauty clear
Between our riches and our liberty?

We must have many Lincoln-hearted men.
A city is not builded in a day.
And they must do their work, and come and go,
While countless generations pass away.

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN

(John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902)

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

“We have buried him now,” thought your foes, and in secret
rejoiced.

They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.

They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you day after day.

Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her crust, and the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor

That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

(To be sung to the tune of "The Blood of the Lamb"
with indicated instrument)

I

(Bass drum beaten loudly.)

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum —
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said: "He 's come."
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale —
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail : —
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death —
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

(Banjos.)

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over. (Booth had groaned for more.)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.

Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang :—
“Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare, blare
On, on upward thro’ the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

II

(Bass drum slower and softer.)

Booth died blind and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

(Sweet flute music.)

Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house square.
Then, in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.

(Bass drum louder.)

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

(Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground.)

The hosts were sandalled, and their wings were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Oh, shout Salvation! It was good to see
Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

(Reverently sung, no instruments.)

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master thro’ the flag-filled air.

Christ came gently with a robe and crown
 For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down.
 He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
 And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

THE CONGO

A STUDY OF THE NEGRO RACE

(Being a memorial to Ray Eldred, a Disciple missionary
 of the Congo River)

I. THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
 Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
 Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table.,
 Pounded on the table,
 Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
 Hard as they were able,
 Boom, boom, Boom,
 With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom.
 THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
 I could not turn from their revel in derision.

A deep rolling bass.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH
 THE BLACK,
 CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN
 TRACK.

*More deliberate
 Solemnly
 chanted.*

Then along that riverbank
 A thousand miles
 Tattooed cannibals danced in files ;
 Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
 And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
 And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes
 of the warriors,
 "BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-
 doctors,
 "Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
 Harry the uplands,
 Steal all the cattle,
 Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
 Bing.
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
 A roaring, epic, rag-time tune
 From the mouth of the Congo
 To the Mountains of the Moon.

*A rapidly
 piling climax
 of speed and
 racket.*

*With a philo-
 sophic pause*

Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.

*Shrilly and with
a heavily accented
metre.*

Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—

"Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

*Like the wind
in the chimney.*

*All the "o"
sounds very
golden Heavy
accents very
heavy. Light
accents very light.
Last line
whispered.*

II THEIR IRREPRESSIBLE HIGH SPIRITS

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH
THE BLACK,

CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN
TRACK.

A negro fairyland swung into view,
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were
sore

At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

*Rather shrill and
high*

*Read exactly as in
first section.*

*Lay emphasis on
the delicate ideas.
Keep as light-
footed as possible.*

A troup of skull-faced witch-men came
 Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
 Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
 And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
 And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
 And danced the juba from wall to wall.
 But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
 With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—
 “Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.” . . .
 Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
 Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
 Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
 And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
 And they pranced with their butterfly partners
 there,
 Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
 Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
 And bells on their ankles and little black-feet.
 And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
 Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
 (Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
 That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

The cake-walk royalty then began
 To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
 To the tune of “Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,”
 While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
 And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
 “Walk with care, walk with care,
 Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
 And all of the other Gods of the Congo,
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
 Beware, beware, walk with care,
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
 Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
 Boom.”

(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
 That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

With pomposity.

With a great deliberation and ghostliness.

With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.

With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.

Slow philosophic calm.

III. THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION

A good old negro in the slums of the town
 Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
 Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
 His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.

*Heavy bass.
 With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.*

Beat on the Bible till he wore it out
 Starting the jubilee revival shout.
 And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
 And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs,
 And they all repented, a thousand strong
 From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
 And slammed with their hymn books till they
 shook the room

With "glory, glory, glory,"
 And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH
 THE BLACK,
 CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN
 TRACK.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
 And showed the Apostles with their coats of mail.
 In bright white steel they were seated round
 And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo
 wound.

And on the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on
 high

Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—
 "Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
 Never again will he hoo-doo you,
 Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Then along that river, a thousand miles
 The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
 Pioneer angels cleared the way
 For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
 For sacred capitals, for temples clean.

Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
 There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed
 A million boats of the angels sailed
 With oars of silver, and prows of blue

And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
 'T was a land transfigured, 't was a new creation.

Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation
 And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
 "Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
 Never again will he hoo-doo you.
 Never again will he hoo-doo you.

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the
 men,
 And only the vulture dared again
 By the far, lone mountains of the moon

*Exactly as in the
 first section. Be-
 gin with terror and
 power, end with
 joy*

*Sung to the tune of
 "Hark, ten thou-
 sand harps and
 voices."*

*With growing
 deliberation
 and joy.*

*In a rather high
 key — as deli-
 cately as possible.*

*To the tune of
 "Hark, ten thou-
 sand harps and
 voices."*

To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
 Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
 “Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
 Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo
 . . . you.”

*Dying down into
 a penetrating,
 terrified whisper.*

THE SANTA-FÉ TRAIL (A HUMORESQUE)

(I asked the old negro. “What is that bird that sings so well?” He answered: “That is the Rachel-Jane.” “Has n’t it another name—lark, or thrush, or the like?” “No. Jus’ Rachel-Jane.”)

I. IN WHICH A RACING AUTO COMES FROM THE EAST

This is the order of the music of the morning:—
 First, from the far East comes but a crooning.
 The crooning turns to a sunrise singing.
 Hark to the *calm-horn*, *balm-horn*, *psalm-horn*.
 Hark to the *faint-horn*, *quaint-horn*, *saint-horn*. . . .

*To be sung
 delicately, to an
 improvised tune.*

Hark to the *pace-horn*, *chase-horn*, *race-horn*.
 And the holy veil of the dawn has gone.
 Swiftly the brazen car comes on.
 It burns in the East as the sunrise burns.
 I see great flashes where the far trail turns.
 Its eyes are lamps like the eyes of dragons.
 It drinks gasoline from big red flagons.
 Butting through the delicate mists of the morning,
 It comes like lightning, goes past roaring.
 It will hail all the windmills, taunting, ringing,
 Dodge the cyclones,
 Count the milestones,
 On through the ranges the prairie-dog tills—
 Scooting past the cattle on the thousand hills. . . .
 Ho for the tear-horn, scare-horn, dare-horn,
 Ho for the gay-horn, *bark-horn*, *bay-horn*.
Ho for Kansas, land that restores us
When houses choke us, and great books bore us!
Sunrise Kansas, harvesters’ Kansas,
A million men have found you before us.
A million men have found you before us.

*To be sung or read
 with great speed.*

*To be read or sung
 in a rolling bass,
 with some deliberation.*

II. IN WHICH MANY AUTOS PASS WESTWARD

I want live things in their pride to remain.
 I will not kill one grasshopper vain
 Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a door.

In an even, deliberate, narrative manner.

I let him out, give him one chance more.
 Perhaps, while he gnaws my hat in his whim,
 Grasshopper lyrics occur to him.

I am a tramp by the long trail's border,
 Given to squalor, rags and disorder.
 I nap and amble and yawn and look,
 Write fool-thoughts in my grubby book,
 Recite to the children, explore at my ease,
 Work when I work, beg when I please,
 Give crank-drawings, that make folks stare
 To the half-grown boys in the sunset glare,
 And get me a place to sleep in the hay
 At the end of a live-and-let-live day.

I find in the stubble of the new-cut weeds
 A whisper and a feasting, all one needs :
 The whisper of the strawberries, white and red
 Here where the new-cut weeds lie dead.

But I would not walk all alone till I die
 Without some life-drunk horns going by.
 And up round this apple-earth they come
 Blasting the whispers of the morning dumb :—
 Cars in a plain realistic row.
 And fair dreams fade
 When the raw horns blow.

On each snapping pennant
 A big black name :—
 The careering city
 Whence each car came.
 They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah,
 Tallahassee and Texarkana.
 They tour from St. Louis, Columbus, Manistee,
 They tour from Peoria, Davenport, Kankakee.
 Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston,
 Cars from Topeka, Emporia, and Austin.
 Cars from Chicago, Hannibal, Cairo.
 Cars from Alton, Oswego, Toledo.
 Cars from Buffalo, Kokomo, Delphi,
 Cars from Lodi, Carmi, Loami.
 Ho for Kansas, land that restores us
 When houses choke us, and great books bore us !
 While I watch the highroad
 And look at the sky,

*Like a train-caller
 in a Union Depo!.*

While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur
 Roll their legions without rain
 Over the blistering Kansas plain —
 While I sit by the milestone
 And watch the sky,
 The United States
 Goes by.

Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking.
 Listen to the quack-horns, slack and clacking.
 Way down the road, trilling like a toad,
 Here comes the *dice*-horn, here comes the *vice*-
 horn,
 Here comes the *snarl*-horn, *brawl*-horn, *lewd*-horn,
 Followed by the *prude*-horn, bleak and squeaking :
 (Some of them from Kansas, some of them from
 Kansas.)
 Here comes the *hod*-horn, *plod*-horn, *sod*-horn,
 Nevermore-to-roam-horn, *loam*-horn, *home*-horn.
 (Some of them from Kansas, some of them from
 Kansas.)

Far away the Rachel-Jane
 Not defeated by the horns
 Sings amid a hedge of thorns : —
 "Love and life,
 Eternal youth —
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,
 Dew and glory,
 Love and truth,
 Sweet, sweet, sweet."

WHILE SMOKE-BLACK FREIGHTS ON THE DOUBLE
 TRACKED RAILROAD,
 DRIVEN AS THOUGH BY THE FOUL FIEND'S
 OX-GOAD,
 SCREAMING TO THE WEST COAST, SCREAMING TO
 THE EAST,
 CARRY OFF A HARVEST, BRING BACK A FEAST,
 AND HARVESTING MACHINERY AND HARNESS FOR
 THE BEAST,
 THE HAND-CARS WHIZ, AND RATTLE ON THE
 RAILS,
 THE SUNLIGHT FLASHES ON THE TIN DINNER-
 PAILS.

And then, in an instant, ye modern men,
 Behold the procession once again,
 The United States goes by !

*To be given very
 harshly, with a
 snapping explo-
 siveness.*

*To be read or
 sung, well-nigh in
 a whisper.*

*Louder and louder
 faster and faster.*

*In a rolling bass,
 with increasing
 deliberation.*

Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking,
 Listen to the *wise-horn*, desperate-to-advise-horn,
 Listen to the *fast-horn*, *kill-horn*, *blast-horn*. . . . *With a snapping explosiveness.*

Far away the Rachel-Jane
 Not defeated by the horns
 Sings amid a hedge of thorns:—
 Love and life,
 Eternal youth,
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,
 Dew and glory,
 Love and truth.
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.

To be sung or read well-nigh in a whisper.

The mufflers open on a score of cars
 With wonderful thunder,
 CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
 CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK,
 CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
 Listen to the gold-horn . . .

To be brawled in the beginning with a snapping explosiveness, ending in a languorous chant.

Old-horn . . .
 Cold horn . . .

And all of the tunes, till the night comes down
 On hay-stack, and ant-hill, and wind-bitten town.
 Then far in the west, as in the beginning,
 Dim in the distance, sweet in retreating,
 Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn,
 Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn. . . .

To be sung to exactly the same whispered tune as the first five lines.

They are hunting the goals that they understand:—

This section beginning sonorously, in a languorous whisper.

San-Francisco and the brown sea-sand.
 My goal is the mystery the beggars win.
 I am caught in the web the night-winds spin.
 The edge of the wheat-ridge speaks to me.
 I talk with the leaves of the mulberry tree.
 And now I hear, as I sit all alone
 In the dusk, by another big Santa-Fé stone,
 The souls of the tall corn gathering round
 And the gay little souls of the grass in the ground.
 Listen to the tale the cottonwood tells.
 Listen to the windmills, singing o'er the wells.
 Listen to the whistling flutes without price
 Of myriad prophets out of paradise.
 Harken to the wonder
 That the night-air carries. . . .
 Listen . . . to . . . the . . . whisper . . .

Of . . . the . . . prairie . . . fairies
 Singing o'er the fairy plain :—
 “Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.
 Love and glory,
 Stars and rain,
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. . . .”

*To the same
 whispered tune as
 the Rachel-Jane
 song — but very
 slowly.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
 That here at midnight, in our little town
 A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
 Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
 He lingers where his children used to play,
 Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
 He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
 A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
 Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
 The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
 He is among us : — as in times before !
 And we who toss and lie awake for long
 Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
 Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
 Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
 Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
 He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
 He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
 The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
 Shall come ; — the shining hope of Europe free :
 The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
 Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
 That all his hours of travail here for men
 Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
 That he may sleep upon his hill again?

Wallace Stevens [1879-]

SUNDAY MORNING

I

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
 Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
 And the green freedom of a cockatoo
 Upon a rug mingle to dissipate
 The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.
 She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
 Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
 As a calm darkens among water-lights.
 The pungent oranges and bright, green wings
 Seem things in some procession of the dead,
 Winding across wide water, without sound.
 The day is like wide water, without sound,
 Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
 Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
 Dominion of the blood and sepulchre.

II

Why should she give her bounty to the dead?
 What is divinity if it can come
 Only in silent shadows and in dreams?
 Shall she not find in comforts of the sun,
 In pungent fruit and bright, green wings, or else
 In any balm or beauty of the earth,
 Things to be cherished like the thought of heaven?
 Divinity must live within herself:
 Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow;
 Griefings in loneliness, or unsubdued
 Elations when the forest blooms; gusty
 Emotions on wet roads on autumn nights;
 All pleasures and all pains, remembering
 The bough of summer and the winter branch.
 These are the measures destined for her soul.

III

Jove in the clouds had his inhuman birth.
 No mother suckled him, no sweet land gave
 Large-mannered motions to his mythy mind.
 He moved among us, as a muttering king,
 Magnificent, would move among his hinds,
 Until our blood, commingling, virginal,

With heaven, brought such requital to desire
 The very hinds discerned it, in a star.
 Shall our blood fail? Or shall it come to be
 The blood of paradise? And shall the earth
 Seem all of paradise that we shall know?
 The sky will be much friendlier then than now,
 A part of labor and a part of pain,
 And next in glory to enduring love,
 Not this dividing and indifferent blue.

IV

She says, "I am content when wakened birds,
 Before they fly, test the reality
 Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;
 But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
 Return no more, where, then, is paradise?"
 There is not any haunt of prophecy,
 Nor any old chimera of the grave,
 Neither the golden underground, nor isle
 Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
 Nor visionary south, nor cloudy palm
 Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured
 As April's green endures; or will endure
 Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
 Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
 By the consummation of the swallow's wings.

V

She says, "But in contentment I still feel
 The need of some imperishable bliss."
 Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
 Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams
 And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
 Of sure obliteration on our paths,
 The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
 Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
 Whispered a little out of tenderness,
 She makes the willow shiver in the sun
 For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
 Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
 She causes boys to pile new plums and pears
 On disregarded plate. The maidens taste
 And stray impassioned in the littering leaves.

VI

Is there no change of death in paradise?
 Does ripe fruit never fall? Or do the boughs
 Hang always heavy in that perfect sky,
 Unchanging, yet so like our perishing earth,
 With rivers like our own that seek for seas
 They never find, the same receding shores
 That never touch with inarticulate pang?
 Why set the pear upon those river-banks
 Or spice the shores with odors of the plum?
 Alas, that they should wear our colors there,
 The silken weavings of our afternoons,
 And pick the strings of our insipid lutes!
 Death is the mother of beauty, mystical,
 Within whose burning bosom we devise
 Our earthly mothers waiting, sleeplessly.

VII

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
 Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
 Their boisterous devotion to the sun,
 Not as a god, but as a god might be,
 Naked among them, like a savage source.
 Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
 Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
 And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
 The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
 The trees, like serafin, and echoing hills,
 That choir among themselves long afterward.
 They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
 Of men that perish and of summer morn.
 And whence they came and whither they shall go
 The dew upon their feet shall manifest.

VIII

She hears, upon that water without sound,
 A voice that cries, "The tomb in Palestine
 Is not the porch of spirits lingering.
 It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay."
 We live in an old chaos of the sun,
 Or old dependency of day and night,
 Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
 Of that wide water, inescapable.
 Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
 Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;

Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness ;
 And, in the isolation of the sky,
 At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
 Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
 Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

STARS AT TALLAPOOSA

The lines are straight and swift between the stars.
 The night is not the cradle that they cry,
 The criers, undulating the deep-oceaned phrase.
 The lines are much too dark and much too sharp.

The mind herein attains simplicity.
 There is no moon, no single, silvered leaf.
 The body is no body to be seen
 But is an eye that studies its black lid.

Let these be your delight, secretive hunter,
 Wading the sea-lines, moist and ever-mingling,
 Mounting the earth-lines, long and lax, lethargic.
 These lines are swift and fall without diverging.

The melon-flower nor dew nor web of either
 Is like to these. But in yourself is like :
 A sheaf of brilliant arrows flying straight,
 Flying and falling straightway for their pleasure,
 Their pleasure that is all bright-edged and cold ;
 Or, if not arrows, then the nimblest motions,
 Making recoveries of young nakedness
 And the lost vehemence the midnights hold.

BANTAMS IN PINE-WOODS

Chieftain Iffucan of Azcan in caftan
 Of tan with henna hackles, halt !

Damned universal cock, as if the sun
 Was blackamoor to bear your blazing tail.

Fat ! Fat ! Fat ! Fat ! I am the personal.
 Your world is you. I am my world.

You ten-foot poet among inchlings. Fat !
 Begone ! An inchling bristles in these pines,
 Bristles, and points their Appalachian tangs,
 And fears not portly Azcan nor his hoos.

ANECDOTE OF THE JAR

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the selfsame sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound ;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna.

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.
She searched
The touch of springs,

And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned —
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind —
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.

So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
 The cowl of winter, done repenting.
 So maidens die, to the auroral
 Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
 Of those white elders ; but, escaping,
 Left only Death's ironic scraping.
 Now, in its immortality, it plays
 On the clear viol of her memory,
 And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

William Carlos Williams [1883-

METRIC FIGURE

There is a bird in the poplars !
 It is the sun !
 The leaves are little yellow fish
 swimming in the river.
 The bird skims above them,
 day is on his wings.
 Phœbus !
 It is he that is making
 the great gleam among the poplars !
 It is his singing
 outshines the noise
 of leaves clashing in the wind.

GULLS

My townspeople, beyond in the great world,
 are many with whom it were far more
 profitable for me to live than here with you.
 These whirr about me calling, calling !
 and for my own part I answer them, loud as I can,
 but they, being free, pass !
 I remain ! Therefore, listen !
 For you will not soon have another singer.

First I say this : you have seen
 the strange birds, have you not, that sometimes
 rest upon our river in winter ?
 Let them cause you to think well then of the storms

that drive many to shelter. These things
do not happen without reason.

And the next thing I say is this:
I saw an eagle once circling against the clouds
over one of our principal churches —
Easter, it was — a beautiful day! — :
three gulls came from above the river
and crossed slowly seaward!
Oh, I know you have your own hymns, I have heard them —
and because I knew they invoked some great protector
I could not be angry with you, no matter
how much they outraged true music —

You see, it is not necessary for us to leap at each other,
and, as I told you, in the end
the gulls moved seaward very quietly.

PASTORAL

The little sparrows
hop ingenuously
about the pavement
quarreling
with sharp voices
over those things
that interest them.
But we who are wiser
shut ourselves in
on either hand
and no one knows
whether we think good
or evil.

Meanwhile,
the old man who goes about
gathering dog-lime
walks in the gutter
without looking up
and his tread
is more majestic than
that of the Episcopal minister
approaching the pulpit
of a Sunday.

These things
astonish me beyond words.

TRACT

I will teach you my townspeople
how to perform a funeral —
for you have it over a troop
of artists —
unless one should scour the world —
you have the ground sense necessary.

See! the hearse leads.
I begin with a design for a hearse.
For Christ's sake not black —
nor white either — and not polished!
Let it be weathered — like a farm wagon —
with gilt wheels (this could be
applied fresh at small expense)
or no wheels at all:
a rough dray to drag over the ground.

Knock the glass out!
My God — glass, my townspeople!
For what purpose? Is it for the dead
to look out or for us to see
how well he is housed or to see
the flowers or the lack of them —
or what?
To keep the rain and snow from him?
He will have a heavier rain soon:
pebbles and dirt and what not.
Let there be no glass —
and no upholstery phew!
and no little brass rollers
and small easy wheels on the bottom —
my townspeople what are you thinking of?

A rough plain hearse then
with gilt wheels and no top at all.
On this the coffin lies
by its own weight.

No wreathes please —
especially no hot house flowers.
Some common memento is better,
something he prized and is known by:
his old clothes — a few books perhaps —
God knows what! You realize
how we are about these things

my townspeople —
something will be found — anything
even flowers if he had come to that.

So much for the hearse.
For heaven's sake though see to the driver!
Take off the silk hat! In fact
that's no place at all for him —
up there unceremoniously
dragging our friend out to his own dignity!
Bring him down — bring him down!
Low and inconspicuous! I'd not have him ride
on the wagon at all — damn him —
the undertaker's understrapper!
Let him hold the reins
and walk at the side
and inconspicuously too!

Then briefly as to yourselves:
Walk behind — as they do in France,
seventh class, or if you ride
Hell take curtains! Go with some show
of inconvenience; sit openly —
to the weather as to grief.
Or do you think you can shut grief in?
What — from us? We who have perhaps
nothing to lose? Share with us
share with us — it will be money
in your pockets.

Go now
I think you are ready.

HERO

Fool,
put your adventures
into those things
which break ships —
not female flesh.

Let there pass
over the mind
the waters of
four oceans, the airs
of four skies!

Return hollow-bellied,
keen-eyed, hard!
A simple scar or two.

Little girls will come
bringing you
roses for your button-hole.

D A W N

Ecstatic bird songs pound
the hollow vastness of the sky
with metallic clinkings —
beating color up into it
at a far edge, — beating it, beating it
with rising, triumphant ardor, —
stirring it into warmth,
quickenning in it a spreading change, —
bursting wildly against it as
dividing the horizon, a heavy sun
lifts himself — is lifted —
bit by bit above the edge
of things, — runs free at last
out into the open — ! lumbering
gloried in full release upward —
songs cease.

D A N S E R U S S E

If I when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees, —
if I in my north room
danse naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself :
“I am lonely, lonely.
I was born to be lonely.
I am best so !”
If I admire my arms, my face,
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
against the yellow drawn shades, —

who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?

A GOODNIGHT

Go to sleep — though of course you will not —
to tideless waves thundering slantwise against
strong embankments, rattle and swish of spray
dashed thirty feet high, caught by the lake wind,
scattered and strewn broadcast in over the steady
car rails! Sleep, sleep! Gulls' cries in a wind-gust
broken by the wind; calculating wings set above
the field of waves breaking.

Go to sleep to the lunge between foam-crests,
refuse churned in the recoil. Food! Food!
Offal! Offal! that holds them in the air; wave-white
for the one purpose, feather upon feather, the wild
chill in their eyes, the hoarseness in their voices —
sleep, sleep . . .

Gentlefooted crowds are treading out your lullaby.
Their arms nudge, they brush shoulders,
hitch this way then that, mass and surge at the crossings —
lullaby, lullaby! The wild-fowl police whistles,
the enraged roar of the traffic, machine shrieks:
it is all to put you to sleep,
to soften your limbs in relaxed postures,
and that your head slip sidewise, and your hair loosen
and fall over your eyes and over your mouth,
brushing your lips wistfully that you may dream,
sleep and dream —

A black fungus springs out about lonely church doors —
sleep, sleep. The Night, coming down upon
the wet boulevard, would start you awake with his
message, to have in at your window. Pay no
heed to him. He storms at your sill with
cooings, with gesticulations, curses!
You will not let him in. He would keep you from sleeping.
He would have you sit under your desk lamp
brooding, pondering; he would have you
slide out the drawer, take up the ornamented dagger
and handle it. It is late, it is nineteen-nineteen —
go to sleep, his cries are a lullaby;
his jabbering is a sleep-well-my-baby; he is
a crackbrained messenger.

The maid waking you in the morning
when you are up and dressing,
the rustle of your clothes as you raise them —
it is the same tune.

At table the cold, greenish, split grapefruit, its juice
on the tongue, the clink of the spoon in
your coffee, the toast odors say it over and over.

The open street-door lets in the breath of
the morning wind from over the lake.

The bus coming to a halt grinds from its sullen brakes —
lullaby, lullaby. The crackle of a newspaper,
the movement of the troubled coat beside you —
sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep . . .

It is the sting of snow, the burning liquor of
the moonlight, the rush of rain in the gutters packed
with dead leaves: go to sleep, go to sleep.
And the night passes — and never passes —

THE DESOLATE FIELD

Vast and grey, the sky
is a simulacrum
to all but him whose days
are vast and grey, and —
In the tall, dried grasses
a goat stirs
with nozzle searching the ground.
— my head is in the air
but who am I . . .?
And amazed my heart leaps
at the thought of love
vast and grey
yearning silently over me.

Sara Teasdale

[1884-]

THE LOOK

Strephon kissed me in the spring,
Robin in the fall,
But Colin only looked at me
And never kissed at all.

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,
Robin's lost in play,
But the kiss in Colin's eyes
Haunts me night and day.

THE SONG FOR COLIN

I sang a song at dusking time
 Beneath the evening star,
 And Terence left his latest rhyme
 To answer from afar.

Pierrot laid down his lute to weep,
 And sighed, "She sings for me."
 But Colin slept a careless sleep
 Beneath an apple tree.

THE NET

I made you many and many a song,
 Yet never one told all you are —
 It was as though a net of words
 Were flung to catch a star ;

It was as though I curved my hand
 And dipped sea-water eagerly,
 Only to find it lost the blue
 Dark splendor of the sea.

THE LONG HILL

I must have passed the crest a while ago
 And now I am going down —
 Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
 But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

All the morning I thought how proud I should be
 To stand there straight as a queen,
 Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me —
 But the air was dull ; there was little I could have seen.

It was nearly level along the beaten track
 And the brambles caught in my gown —
 But it 's no use now to think of turning back,
 The rest of the way will be only going down.

I SHALL LIVE TO BE OLD

I shall live to be old, who feared I should die young,
 I shall live to be old,
 I shall cling to life as the leaves to the creaking oak
 In the rustle of falling snow and the cold.

The other trees let loose their leaves on the air
 In their russet and red,
 I have lived long enough to wonder which is the best,
 And to envy sometimes the way of the early dead.

ARCTURUS IN AUTUMN

When, in the gold October dusk, I saw you near to setting,
 Arcturus, bringer of spring,
 Lord of the summer nights, leaving us now in autumn,
 Having no pity on our withering;

Oh then I knew at last that my own autumn was upon me,
 I felt it in my blood,
 Restless as dwindling streams that still remember
 The music of their flood.

There in the thickening dark a wind-bent tree above me
 Loosed its last leaves in flight —
 I saw you sink and vanish, pitiless Arcturus,
 You will not stay to share our lengthening night.

WINTER NIGHT SONG

Will you come as of old with singing,
 And shall I hear as of old?
 Shall I rush to open the window
 In spite of the arrowy cold?

Ah no, my dear, ah no,
 I shall sit by the fire reading,
 Though you sing half the night in the snow
 I shall not be heeding.

Though your voice remembers the forest,
 The warm green light and the birds,
 Though you gather the sea in your singing
 And pour its sound into words,

Even so, my dear, even so,
 I shall not heed you at all;
 Though your shoulders are white with snow,
 Though you strain your voice to a call,
 I shall drowse and the fire will drowse,
 The draught will be cold on the floor,
 The clock running down,
 Snow banking the door.

Ezra Pound

[1885-]

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THE TREE

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
 Knowing the truth of things unseen before ;
 Of Daphne and the laurel bow
 And that god-feasting couple old
 That grew elm-oak amid the wold.
 'T was not until the gods had been
 Kindly entreated, and been brought within
 Unto the hearth of their heart's home
 That they might do this wonder thing ;
 Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
 And many a new thing understood
 That was rank folly to my head before.

THRENOS

No more for us the little sighing.
 No more the winds at twilight trouble us.

Lo the fair dead !

No more do I burn.
 No more for us the fluttering of wings
 That whirred in the air above us.

Lo the fair dead !

No more desire flayeth me,
 No more for us the trembling
 At the meeting of hands.

Lo the fair dead !

No more for us the wine of the lips,
 No more for us the knowledge.

Lo the fair dead !

No more the torrent,
 No more for us the meeting-place
 (Lo the fair dead !)
 Tintagoel.

FRANCESCA

You came in out of the night
 And there were flowers in your hands,
 Now you will come out of a confusion of people,
 Out of a turmoil of speech about you.

I who have seen you amid the primal things
 Was angry when they spoke your name
 In ordinary places.

I would that the cool waves might flow over my mind,
 And that the world should dry as a dead leaf,
 Or as a dandelion seed-pod and be swept away,
 So that I might find you again,
 Alone.

ERAT HORA

"Thank you, whatever comes." And then she turned
 And, as the ray of sun on hanging flowers
 Fades when the wind hath lifted them aside,
 Went swiftly from me. Nay, whatever comes
 One hour was sunlit and the most high gods
 May not make boast of any better thing
 Than to have watched that hour as it passed.

THE HOUSE OF SPLENDOUR

'T is Evanoe's,
 A house not made with hands,
 But out somewhere beyond the worldly ways
 Her gold is spread, above, around, inwoven;
 Strange ways and walls are fashioned out of it.

And I have seen my Lady in the sun,
 Her hair was spread about, a sheaf of wings,
 And red the sunlight was, behind it all.

And I have seen her there within her house,
 With six great sapphires hung along the wall,
 Low, panel-shaped, a-level with her knees,
 And all her robe was woven of pale gold.

There are there many rooms and all of gold,
 Of woven walls deep patterned, of email,
 Of beaten work; and through the claret stone,
 Set to some weaving, comes the aureate light.

Here am I come perforce my love of her,
 Behold mine adoration
 Maketh me clear, and there are powers in this
 Which, played on by the virtues of her soul,
 Break down the four-square walls of standing time.

AU JARDIN

O you away high there,
 you that lean
 From amber lattices upon the cobalt night,
 I am below amid the pine trees,
 Amid the little pine trees, hear me !

“The jester walked in the garden.”
 Did he so?

Well, there’s no use your loving me`
 That way, Lady ;
 For I’ve nothing but songs to give you.

I am set wide upon the world’s ways
 To say that life is, some way, a gay thing,
 But you never string two days upon one wire
 But there’ll come sorrow of it.

And I loved a love once,
 Over beyond the moon there,
 I loved a love once,
 And, may be, more times,
 But she danced like a pink moth in the shrubbery.

Oh, I know you women from the “other folk,”
 And it’ll all come right,
 O’ Sundays.

“The jester walked in the garden.”
 Did he so?

A VIRGINAL

No, no ! Go from me. I have left her lately.
 I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
 For my surrounding air hath a new lightness ;
 Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
 And left me cloaked as with a gauze of æther ;
 As with sweet leaves ; as with subtle clearness.
 Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
 To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
 Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
 Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
 As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
 Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
 As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

THE GARRET

Come, let us pity those who are better off than we are.
 Come, my friend, and remember
 that the rich have butlers and no friends,
 And we have friends and no butlers.
 Come, let us pity the married and the unmarried.

Dawn enters with little feet
 like a gilded Pavlova,
 And I am near my desire.
 Nor has life in it aught better
 Than this hour of clear coolness,
 the hour of waking together.

THE GARDEN

En robe de parade.

— SAMAIN

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall
 She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,
 And she is dying piece-meal
 of a sort of emotional anaemia.

And round about there is a rabble
 Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.
 They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding
 Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.
 She would like some one to speak to her,
 And is almost afraid that I
 will commit that indiscretion.

THE SPRING

'Ηρι μεν δι' τε κυδώνιαι

— IBYCUS

Cydonian Spring with her attendant train,
 Maelids and water-girls,
 Stepping beneath a boisterous wind from Thrace,
 Throughout this sylvan place

Spreads the bright tips,
And every vine-stock is
Clad in new brilliancies.

And wild desire

Falls like black lightning.
O bewildered heart,
Though every branch have back what last year lost,
She, who moved here amid the cyclamen,
Moves only now a clinging tenuous ghost.

LES MILLWIN

The little Millwins attend the Russian Ballet.
The mauve and greenish souls of the little Millwins
Were seen lying along the upper seats
Like so many unused boas.

The turbulent and undisciplined host of art students —
The rigorous deputation from "Slade" —
Was before them.

With arms exalted, with fore-arms
Crossed in great futuristic X's, the art students
Exulted, they beheld the splendours of *Cleopatra*.

And the little Millwins beheld these things ;
With their large and anaemic eyes they looked out upon this con-
figuration.

Let us therefore mention the fact,
For it seems to us worthy of record.

THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan :
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever and forever.
Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed,
 You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
 And you have been gone five months.
 The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
 You dragged your feet when you went out.
 By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
 Too deep to clear them away!
 The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
 The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
 Over the grass in the West garden;
 They hurt me. I grow older.
 If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,
 Please let me know beforehand,
 And I will come out to met you

As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

— BY RIHAKU

VILLANELLE: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HOUR

I

I had over-prepared the event,
 that much was ominous.
 With middle-ageing care
 I had laid out just the right books.
 I had almost turned down the pages.

*Beauty is so rare a thing.
 So few drink of my fountain.*

So much barren regret,
 So many hours wasted!
 And now I watch, from the window,
 the rain, the wandering buses.

“Their little cosmos is shaken” —
 the air is alive with that fact.
 In their parts of the city
 they are played on by diverse forces.
 How do I know?
 O, I know well enough.
 For them there is something afoot.
 As for me;
 I had over-prepared the event —

*Beauty is so rare a thing
 So few drink of my fountain.*

Two friends: a breath of the forest . . .
 Friends? Are people less friends
 because one has just, at last, found them?
 Twice they promised to come.

"Between the night and morning?"

Beauty would drink of my mind.
 Youth would awhile forget
 my youth is gone from me.

II

(""Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?
 Someone admired your works,
 And said so frankly.

"Did you talk like a fool,
 The first night?
 The second evening?"

"But they promised again:
 'To-morrow at tea-time.'")

III

Now the third day is here —
 no word from either;
 No word from her nor him,
 Only another man's note:
 "Dear Pound, I am leaving England."

THE AGE DEMANDED AN IMAGE

The age demanded an image
 Of its accelerated grimace,
 Something for the modern stage,
 Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
 Of the inward gaze;
 Better mendacities
 Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
 Made with no loss of time,
 A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
 Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.

John Gould Fletcher [1886-]

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

I. EMBARKATION

Dull masses of dense green,
The forests range their sombre platforms ;
Between them silently, like a spirit,
The river finds its own mysterious path.

Loosely the river sways out, backward, forward,
Always fretting the outer side ;
Shunning the invisible focus of each crescent,
Seeking to spread into shining loops over fields.

Like an enormous serpent, dilating, uncoiling,
Displaying a broad scaly back of earth-smeared gold ;
Swaying out sinuously between the dull motionless forests,
As molten metal might glide down the lip of a vase of dark bronze ;

It goes, while the steamboat drifting out upon it,
Seems now to be floating not only outwards but upwards ;
In the flight of a petal detached and gradually moving skyward
Above the pink explosion of the calyx of the dawn.

II. HEAT

As if the sun had trodden down the sky,
Until no more it holds living air, but only humid vapour,
Heat pressing upon earth with irresistible languor,
Turns all the solid forest into half-liquid smudge.

The heavy clouds like cargo-boats strain slowly against its current ;
And the flickering of the haze is like the thunder of ten thousand
paddles
Against the heavy wall of the horizon, pale-blue and utterly wind-
less,
Whereon the sun hangs motionless, a brassy disc of flame.

III. FULL MOON

Flinging its arc of silver bubbles, quickly shifts the moon
From side to side of us as we go down its path ;
I sit on the deck at midnight and watch it slipping and sliding,
Under my tilted chair, like a thin film of spilt water.

It is weaving a river of light to take the place of this river ;
A river where we shall drift all night, then come to rest in its
shallows ;

And then I shall wake from my drowsiness and look down from
some dim treetop
Over white lakes of cotton, like moonfields on every side.

IV. THE MOON'S ORCHESTRA

When the moon lights up
Its dull red campfire through the trees ;
And floats out, like a white balloon,
Into the blue cup of the night, borne by a casual breeze ;
The moon orchestra then begins to stir.
Jiggle of fiddles commence their crazy dance in the darkness.
Crickets churr
Against the stark reiteration of the rusty flutes which frogs
Puff at from rotted logs
In the swamp.
And then the moon begins her dance of frozen pomp
Over the lightly quivering floor of the flat and mournful river.
Her white feet slightly twist and swirl.
She is a mad girl
In an old unlit ball room
Whose walls, half-guessed at through the gloom,
Are hung with the rusty crape of stark black cypress
Which show, through gaps and tatters, red stains half hidden away

V. THE STEVEDORES

Frieze of warm bronze that glides with catlike movements
Over the gangplank poised and yet awaiting,
The sinewy thudding rhythm of forty shuffling feet
Falling like muffled drumbeats on the stillness.
O roll the cotton down,
Roll, roll the cotton down,
From the further side of Jordan,
O roll the cotton down !

And the river waits,
The river listens,
Chuckling little banjo-notes that break with a flop on the stillness ;
And by the low dark shed that holds the heavy freights,
Two lonely cypress trees stand up and point with stiffened fingers
Far southward where a single chimney stands out aloof in the sky.

VI. NIGHT LANDING

After the whistle's roar has bellowed and shuddered,
Shaking the sleeping town and the somnolent river,
The deep toned floating of the pilot's bell
Suddenly warns the engines.

They stop like heart-beats that abruptly stop,
The shore glides to us, in a wide low curve.

And then — supreme revelation of the river —
The tackle is loosed — the long gangplank swings outwards —
And poised at the end of it, half-naked beneath the searchlight,
A blue-black negro with gleaming teeth waits for his chance to leap.

VII. THE SILENCE

There is a silence I carry about with me always;
A silence perpetual, for it is self-created;
A silence of heat, of water, of unchecked fruitfulness
Through which each year the heavy harvests bloom, and burst and fall.

Deep, matted green silence of my South,
Often within the push and scorn of great cities,
I have seen that mile-wide waste of water swaying out to you,
And on its current glimmering, I am going to the sea.

There is a silence I have achieved: I have walked beyond its threshold;
I know it is without horizons, boundless, fathomless, perfect.
And some day maybe, far away,
I will curl up in it at last and sleep an endless sleep.

LINCOLN

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

Ungainly, laboring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold every one safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;

A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards into
the earth

Towards old things;

Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke with
God,

Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what, and
found their goal at last;

Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all
seemed lost,

Many bitter winters of defeat;

Down to the granite of patience

These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing, seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it

The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,

Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring not forth
good fruit

Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is silence abroad in the land today,

And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;

And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.

Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence
Like laboring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude
clay-fields:

“I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring,
But there were also many things which I left behind.

“Tombs that were quiet;

One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.

“Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence,
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sunsetting,
No victory but to Him who has given all.”

IV

The clamor of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the battle
is silent.

The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on afresh its
bright colors.

But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and crossing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.
Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes — stripes red for the pain that he bore for you —
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to your law.

Strew over him flowers :
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower ;

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet,
And beside it there lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

THE LAST FRONTIER

Having passed over the world,
And seen three seas and two mountains,
He came to the last frontier.

On a hilltop
There were two men making a hole in the ground :
And beside it, his own dead body lay.

The thin man stroked his beard,
And wondered if the grave was deep enough ;
The fat man sweated and dug,
And longed for a glass of beer.

Meantime his body lay there,
In a shabby suit, on a bed of wet leaves.
And the clouds of the evening, blown from beyond the world,
Swung lightly past his face ;

But he waited until
The body was dropped and the earth shovelled deep upon it :

The lean man put a cross,
The fat man stumped off home.

Then he went back from the last frontier
To the countries he had known years ago ;
To the palaces of night and the peaks ringed with fire,
Without hope.

EXIT

Thus would I have it :
So should it be for me,
The scene of my departure.
Cliffs ringed with scarlet,
And the sea pounding
The pale brown sand
Mile after mile ;
And then, afar off,
White on the horizon,
One ship with sails full-set
Passing slowly and serenely,
Like a proud burst of music,
To fortunate islands.

I HAD SCARCELY FALLEN ASLEEP

I had scarcely fallen asleep
Five minutes, but no more ;
When I awoke there were the self-same walls,
The self-same polished floor,

The self-same night without ;
And, between all these and me,
Acre on acre of pale unscented flowers,
The same eternity.

SONG OF THE OLD MAN

I met a man late yesternight,
His eye was keen, his beard was white ;
His face gleamed with prophetic light.

Under the shadows of a wood
Where long ago men, bound by blood,
Had slain each other, pale he stood.

He gazed on me, then slowly spoke ;
Each word was like a hammer-stroke ;
Under its ring old memories woke.

He said : 'Ere man can safely win
To that vast pinnacle which all sin
And death press ever, come not in ;

'Man must time's blackest back-world bound,
Twice enter chaos and twice sound
The sea that has no firm-fixed ground.

'He must claim kinship with that snake
Which, lowest of living things, did take
Him captive ; yes, for evil's sake,

'He must taste doubly of the fruit
Forbidden : godhead be yet brute,
Eat of the potent dragon-root.

'Beneath the world-ash buried lie
Yet spread his wings far to the sky ;
Nor any peak has pierced so high.

'Link up all life in tragic dance,
Reason, will, madness, doubt, and chance,
And through them all send one clear glance.

'The prophets die now ; home they call
My spirit ; with these words I fall,
Yet my Word waits for burial.'

I looked about ; the wood was deep ;
Spars stood and shattered trunks asleep,
About them oceans seemed to creep.

Fathomless oceans of dull hearts
That throbbed on fiercely ; fits and starts
Of effort ; lack of joys and arts.

Time ebbed ; a long wave on the shore
That once had burst with foam and roar,
Now staggered, straggled, stirred no more.

I looked about and muttered, 'Why ?'
But all that answered to that cry
Was the stark silence of the sky.

SONG OF THE MODERNS

We more than others have the perfect right
To see the cities like flambeaux flare along the night.

We more than others have the right to cast away
Thought like a withered leaf, since it has served its day ;

Since for this transient joy which not for long can burn
 Within our hearts, we gave up in return

Ten thousand years of holy magic power
 Drawn from the darkness to transcend death's hour.

For every witch that died an electric lamp shall flare,
 For every wizard drowned, the clear blue air

Shall roar with jazz-bands into listening ears ;
 For every alchemist who spent in vain his years

Seeking the stone of truth, a motor-horn
 Shall scare the sheep that wander among the corn.

And there shall be no more the spirits of the deep,
 Nor holy satyrs slumbering upon the steep,

Nor angels at a manger or a cross.

Life shall go on ; to ugly gain or loss ;

Yet vaster and more tragic, till at last
 This present too shall make part of the past : —

Till all the joy and tragedy that man knows
 To-day, become stiff gravestones in long rows :

Till none dare look on the mountains ranked afar,
 And think 'These are the cast-off leavings of some star.'

THE PORTRAIT

Through his eye searching far
 Over the bone-stretched rondure of my face,
 Exploring every scar
 And lingering on the meaning of each trace,

Through his hand searching to fulfil
 The image left behind me in a brain
 By the packed cohorts of my thought and will
 Externalized in flesh, I shall remain

Not mine but mine and his ;
 A link 'twixt thought and act none can discern.
 Yet my portrait is this,
 And in it all my days unspoken burn.

Yet only doubly unknown time may mark
 What his hand wrought in colour, line, and tone ;
 And a space uttered outwardly of that dark
 And changeless silence where life broods alone.

BRAHMA

Brahma sleeps.
On his broad palm, the world
Rose against blue,
A lotus-leaf
Silently shed, is curled.

Brahma dreams,
In the thick dull blur
Of his mind, unfathomed —
Fathomless ever —
Dreams stir and blur
Worshipped and worshipper.

Brahma wakens,
Bids Shiva play ;
Shiva dances,
Springs and dances ;
The universe, time,
Man and his madness,
Sun, wheeling planets,
Sirius, Orion,
Worlds gleaming, perfect,
Woman's white shoulders,
Dust, worms and ruin —
All things to nothing
Are swept away.

LAST JUDGMENT

There fell red rain of spears athwart the sky,
Flame flapped upon a heather-covered moor,
Green waves tossed high the ships that steamed near shore
And dashed their keels to wreck. Aloof and high

The evening star like a gold plummet fell
Into the shadowy horror of a sea
Frozen to glass. The sky split. Vacantly
Across the void there trailed the Snake of Hell.

Now out of every graveyard on the earth
There suddenly writhed in flame and stood up new as man
A being whose girth no human eye could span ;
Two heads it had — one like a babe at birth,

The other like a skull. It hollowly spoke
Like wind that roars in echoes huge and vast,

Against the unconceived, unfathomed past :—
 ‘Now ended is God’s high and pitiless joke.’

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I. BEFORE AND AFTER

Iron cities swim upon the sea ;
 And tailored millions travel
 Across lacustrine gravel :
 Digging the foundations for an electric sign,
 Men found a mammoth’s tooth and a Roman bottle of wine.

Ten years, ten years,
 Shall bring you many changes, and alter hopes to tears.

The horse has gone on into eternity :—
 In our Hispano-Suizas cushioned, soft,
 We gaze aloft
 Watching a winged thing cut across our sky.

The gondola is going ;
 The chug of motor-boats will rack those walls,
 Explode across the halls
 Once rocked to melody by the waves’ soft flowing.

The negro thinks the missionary
 Speaks with departed spirits upon the telephone ;
 So he has grown
 No longer black and upright, but morose and wary.
 New millionaires and movie-stars combine
 To make a dumb show of the Vatican ;
 Tibet to Oshkosh is a short day’s span ;
 The Dalai Lama asks an actress out to dine.

The white mob conquers the worn-out world to-day,
 Before the hosts of yellow, black, and red ;
 Civilized, white, and barbarous we will stay
 Before we are to outer darkness shed.

As moving through music,
 Repeating, rising, suffering, and crying ;
 Yet slowly and inevitably
 And darkly dying ;
 I pause one breathless moment
 To recollect my dreams ;
 Now all of them that mattered
 Is long burnt out, it seems.

Kisses upon a hill-top
 Where rhododendrons ran aflame
 Against a wall of glittering leaves.
 Cool through the twilight moved your fresh bright body,
 Bringing me offerings of joy.
 Beware of love's late fire;
 From its black traces you will never part
 Your will has changed to water, your best flame to destroy.

There was a blaze of hopes that came to nothing;
 And there was shining wine,
 There was city full of lights and voices,
 And there was youth at play
 Swift as a dancer leaping
 Through rain of roses over Tyrian marble,
 To catch applause;
 There was a blackened gibbous shape at midnight rising,
 Of which no one — till later — knew the cause.

Ten years, ten years,
 Will conquer youth and quell your hopes and fears.

Suddenly, with laugh,
 The Operator changed the scene;
 Darkness fell on the Russian Ballet curtain —
 Trains full of smoky soldiers sped on Paris —
 I stood sagely regarding,
 With thoughts grown grim and cold,
 Midsummer snow.

Ten years, ten years,
 Shall I have ever done with their unsummed arrears?
 Or shall I approach rapidly,
 Like a great ship with sails outflung,
 But with its dark hull rotting beneath it,
 Rotting and letting in the incoming sea,
 The whirlpool wherein I collapse
 At the latter end of the world?

II. THE RIVER FLOWS

Emerging with the daybreak,
 Drifting in silence down a sluggish river,
 Between two banks dividing
 That held the summer in them, firm forever,
 I saw the cottonwoods
 Receding southwards,
 The arms of the cypress

Touch the horizon;
The great white pelicans
Far off, beating and fluttering their outstretched wings.

At Cairo the ranks of the corn stood up — a plumed immortal army.
We drifted on in a sunset of smoky heat:
There was a flatboat hanging alongside laden deep with melons,
A passion-flower vine upon a whitewashed wall.

At St. Louis we waited all morning with the roar of the trucks cutting across the cobbles;
The river running through the great arches of the bridge above us;
The mules flicking their ears against the flies.
At New Orleans we tied to the levee in the quiet of early morning,
We wakened to find the city washed clean by early daylight,
City once seen in midwinter glory, now drowsing in summer silence.

And the river took me,
The river which flowed through my dreams and which goes on still
in my heart;
The masculine yellow Mississippi which the railroads had made
forgotten,
The river of Spanish explorers, of canebrakes and floods, the pathway of war that had cut through the heart of my South.

I saw it once and I see it now forever,
For with the next spring
It was time to go.
Back to grey Europe
Shuddering under the war-cloud that hung loweringly poised above it.

Manhattan, the opulent and the daring, faded;
The broad-shaded Southern town that I loved went out of existence,
The deep jade of the redwoods about San Francisco, the fire of their
orange trunks disappeared from life,
The stony hillsides of New England, the sparse white farmhouses
followed.
The hard grey streets of Chicago stretching relentlessly forward
into the prairie from the shores of the wide blue lake,
These could not keep me back.
There dropped upon them all the calm of a green-wooded harbour,
Terraced streets and belfry by the shore,
Skeleton clippers standing at attention
Amid a world at war.

III. THE SHIP GOES DOWN

Suddenly from the deck a proud still face,
Too far away to help, too old to dare,

Flashed and it darkened as the ship went down
On Europe never more to be the same.

There were guns, guns, guns pointing to me ;
Guns ranked to east and west and north and south :
Between their nozzles I fled
Far out upon the snow,
Towards the summit dark amid the pines
Where none would ever follow.

Caught in the whirl, we drift
This side and that, to and fro, every way :
For some the darkness did not ever lift ;
Did I win through that day ?
In racking clamour, two years fled
To take their places with ten million dead.

But I upon a summit hid in mist
Wondered what could the future hide from view : —
A cross, a resurrection from the tomb,
Or merely nothingness ?
A ship across the west drew breath and paused.
Sunset — orange and maroon : —
Once more for me there was naught to do but go.

IV. THAT WHICH WAS LEFT

Flickering heat of an August morning,
Through which my heart laboured and pounded
Like a dung-cart going over cobbles ;
The pavements turning about me
As in a drunken dream.

He stood upon the platform and he saw
The mob assembled sixty feet below,
The iron sides of the tank
Twelve feet across, the dish of shallow water
Into which he must plunge.
The wind was soft and easy.
Hushed and yet wonderingly the crowd attended.
He poised and raised his arms aloft
And then deliberately he turned his back
And toppled down.

His body cut the air ;
Twice did he turn himself before he reached the bottom :
Two somersaults and you will find
Me — the resounding harp-like sea shut into its narrow shell,

Twelve feet across;
He struck into the water,
An instant later stood up dripping.
Few cared to clap their hands.

Still cutting through time's warp and weft,
The world, like a diver, falls;
The world is of its best bereft,
Best take unaltered what is left;
Heed you, whom darkness calls.

Dry year of eclipse — the summer laboured on and on,
Like an old voice mumbling in a long deserted room:
The slave yearned for new slavery — the free man despaired of
dawn.

At spring a million flowers enwreathed a forgotten tomb.

He went, the one in whose eyes I had trusted,
On whose breast I had leaned
As John leaned on another's breast and heard the bread
Broken — the sound of loosing star from star.
Thrice did he come to me from the cold tomb,
Thrice I denied him after he departed.

And he with the grey eyes,
Writhing his lips into a bitterer smile
Of stern endurance of cold, joyless fate;
He too moved swiftly out of my life forever.
He left a song that moved in endless night,
The song of man, abandoned by his gods.

I heard it clearly on the barren moor,
Where the wind strikes amid the grass,
Immense and sunken monoliths of weatherbeaten stone;
The wind — it blows a tone
Of old impersonal things,
Which for our sorrow do not grow the lesser,
Though time goes by them on unchanging wings.

This that I heard made all that I have been
Like to a theatre in which scene on scene
Appears without an actor, and where no applause
Breaks forth; these fancies in the brain, what is their cause?

'Man did the gods make
Nature's sole master;
Broad-browed and lordly,
King of earth's harvests.

Many the gifts they gave to him ;
 Much joy he won therefrom.
 He whom they abandon,
 Exile from their glory.

'Weak, puling, foolish,
 He strives to remember
 His kingdom forgotten.
 Pitiful, lonely
 Last remnant of man !
 With him shall the gods not reckon,
 Neither length of days,
 Nor lasting renown,
 Nor love requited,
 Shall be his.'

After a year of rain old dreams came back,
 And once more flourished, maybe only grew
 Within a field unseen — if the last track
 Back to that magic past I only knew !
 Sometimes it seems in me ; again in you.

Strive then no longer,
 Waken or slumber,
 Labour or suffer,
 With your small day be content :
 Yet be at peace within your inner mind,
 And you will find
 Far, far beyond your loneliness and pain
 Grey memories ripening under heavy rain.

H. D.

[1886—]

THE HELMSMAN

O be swift —
 we have always known you wanted us.

We fled inland with our flocks,
 we pastured them in hollows,
 cut off from the wind
 and the salt track of the marsh.

We worshipped inland —
 we stepped past wood-flowers,
 we forgot your tang,
 we brushed wood-grass.

We wandered from pine-hills
 through oak and scrub-oak tangles,
 we broke hyssop and bramble,
 we caught flower and new bramble-fruit
 in our hair: we laughed
 as each branch whipped back,
 we tore our feet in half buried rocks
 and knotted roots and acorn-cups.

We forgot — we worshipped,
 we parted green from green,
 we sought further thickets,
 we dipped our ankles
 through leaf-mould and earth,
 and wood and wood-bank enchanted us —

and the feel of the clefts in the bark,
 and the slope between tree and tree —
 and a slender path strung field to field
 and wood to wood
 and hill to hill
 and the forest after it.

We forgot — for a moment
 tree-resin, tree-bark,
 sweat of a torn branch
 were sweet to the taste.

We were enchanted with the fields,
 the tufts of coarse grass
 in the shorter grass —
 we loved all this.

But now, our boat climbs — hesitates — drops —
 climbs — hesitates — crawls back —
 climbs — hesitates —
 O be swift —
 we have always known you wanted us.

SEA GODS

I

They say there is no hope —
 sand — drift — rocks — rubble of the sea —
 the broken hulk of a ship,
 hung with shreds of rope,
 pallid under the cracked pitch.

they say there is no hope
to conjure you —
no whip of the tongue to anger you —
no hate of words
you must rise to refute.

They say you are twisted by the sea,
you are cut apart
by wave-break upon wave-break,
that you are misshapen by the sharp rocks,
broken by the rasp and after-rasp.

That you are cut, torn, mangled,
torn by the stress and beat,
no stronger than the strips of sand
along your ragged beach.

II

But we bring violets,
great masses — single, sweet,
wood-violets, stream-violets,
violets from a wet marsh.

Violets in clumps from hills,
tufts with earth at the roots,
violets tugged from rocks,
blue violets, moss, cliff, river-violets.

Yellow violets' gold,
burnt with a rare tint —
violets like red ash
among tufts of grass.

We bring deep-purple
bird-foot violets.

We bring the hyacinth-violet,
sweet, bare, chill to the touch —
and violets whiter than the in-rush
of your own white surf.

III

For you will come,
you will yet haunt men in ships,
you will trail across the fringe of strait
and circle the jagged rocks.

You will trail across the rocks
and wash them with your salt,
you will curl between sand-hills —
you will thunder along the cliff —
break — retreat — get fresh strength —
gather and pour weight upon the beach.

You will draw back,
and the ripple on the sand-shelf
will be witness of your track.
O privet-white, you will paint
the lintel of wet sand with froth.

You will bring myrrh-bark
and drift laurel-wood from hot coasts !
when you hurl high — high —
we will answer with a shout.

For you will come,
you will come,
you will answer our taut hearts,
you will break the lie of men's thoughts,
and cherish and shelter us.

HERMES OF THE WAYS

I

The hard sand breaks,
and the grains of it
are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it,
the wind,
playing on the wide shore,
piles little ridges,
and the great waves
break over it.

But more than the many-foamed ways
of the sea,
I know him
of the triple path-ways,
Hermes,
who awaits.

Dubious,
facing three ways,

welcoming wayfarers,
he whom the sea-orchard
shelters from the west,
from the east
weathers sea-wind ;
fronts the great dunes.

Wind rushes
over the dunes,
and the coarse, salt-crusted grass
answers.

Heu,
it whips round my ankles !

II

Small is
this white stream,
flowing below ground
from the poplar-shaded hill,
but the water is sweet.

Apples on the small trees
are hard,
too small,
too late ripened
by a desperate sun
that struggles through sea-mist.

The boughs of the trees
are twisted
by many bafflings ;
twisted are
the small-leaved boughs.

But the shadow of them
is not the shadow of the mast head
nor of the torn sails.

Hermes, Hermes,
the great sea foamed,
gnashed its teeth about me ;
but you have waited,
where sea-grass tangles with
shore-grass.

ADONIS

I

Each of us like you
 has died once,
 each of us like you
 has passed through drift of wood-leaves,
 cracked and bent
 and tortured and unbent
 in the winter frost,
 then burnt into gold points,
 lighted afresh,
 crisp amber, scales of gold-leaf,
 gold turned and re-welded
 in the sun-heat;

each of us like you
 has died once,
 each of us has crossed an old wood-path
 and found the winter leaves
 so golden in the sun-fire
 that even the live wood-flowers
 were dark.

II

Not the gold on the temple-front
 where you stand,
 is as gold as this,
 not the gold that fastens your sandal,
 nor the gold reft
 through your chiselled locks
 is as gold as this last year's leaf,
 not all the gold hammered and wrought
 and beaten
 on your lover's face,
 brow and bare breast
 is as golden as this:

each of us like you
 has died once,
 each of us like you
 stands apart, like you
 fit to be worshipped.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea —
whirl your pointed pines,
splash your great pines
on our rocks,
hurl your green over us,
cover us with your pools of fir.

LEDA

Where the slow river
meets the tide,
a red swan lifts red wings
and darker beak,
and underneath the purple down
of his soft breast
uncurls his coral feet.

Through the deep purple
of the dying heat
of sun and mist,
the level ray of sun-beam
has caressed
the lily with dark breast,
and flecked with richer gold
its golden crest.

Where the slow lifting
of the tide,
floats into the river
and slowly drifts
among the reeds,
and lifts the yellow flags,
he floats
where tide and river meet.

Ah kingly kiss —
no more regret
nor old deep memories
to mar the bliss;
where the low sedge is thick,
the gold day-lily
outspreads and rests
beneath soft fluttering
of red swan wings
and warm quivering
of the red swan's breast.

HIPPOLYTUS TEMPORIZES

I worship the greatest first —
 (it were sweet, the couch,
 the brighter ripple of cloth
 over the dipped fleece ;
 the thought : her bones
 under the flesh are white
 as sand which along a beach
 covers but keeps the print
 of the crescent shapes beneath :
 I thought :
 between cloth and fleece,
 so her body lies.)

I worship first, the great —
 (ah, sweet, your eyes —
 what God, invoked in Crete,
 gave them the gift to part
 as the Sidonian myrtle-flower
 suddenly, wide and swart,
 then swiftly,
 the eye-lids having provoked our hearts —
 as suddenly beat and close.)

I worship the feet, flawless,
 that haunt the hills —
 (ah, sweet, dare I think,
 beneath fetter of golden clasp,
 of the rhythm, the fall and rise
 of yours, carven, slight
 beneath straps of gold that keep
 their slender beauty caught,
 like wings and bodies
 of trapped birds.)

I worship the greatest first —
 (suddenly into my brain —
 the flash of sun on the snow,
 the fringe of light and the drift,
 the crest and the hill-shadow —
 ah, surely now I forget,
 ah splendour, my goddess turns :
 or was it the sudden heat,
 beneath quivering of molten flesh,
 of veins, purple as violets?)

AT BAIA

I should have thought
 in a dream you would have brought
 some lovely, perilous thing,
 orchids piled in a great sheath,
 as who would say (in a dream)
 I send you this,
 who left the blue veins
 of your throat unkissed.

Why was it that your hands
 (that never took mine)
 your hands that I could see
 drift over the orchid heads
 so carefully,
 your hands, so fragile, sure to lift
 so gently, the fragile flower stuff —
 ah, ah, how was it

You never sent (in a dream)
 the very form, the very scent,
 not heavy, not sensuous,
 but perilous — perilous —
 of orchids, piled in a great sheath,
 and folded underneath on a bright scroll
 some word :

Flower sent to flower ;
 for white hands, the lesser white,
 less lovely of flower leaf,

or

Lover to lover, no kiss,
 no touch, but forever and ever this.

FRAGMENT 113

“Neither honey nor bee for me.”

— SAPPHO

Not honey,
 not the plunder of the bee
 from meadow or sand-flower
 or mountain bush ;
 from winter-flower or shoot
 born of the later heat :
 not honey, not the sweet

stain on the lips and teeth :
 not honey, not the deep
 plunge of soft belly
 and the clinging of the gold-edged
 pollen-dusted feet ;
 though rapture blind my eyes,
 and hunger crisp
 dark and inert my mouth,
 not honey, not the south,
 not the tall stalk
 of red twin-lilies,
 nor light branch of fruit tree
 caught in flexible light branch ;
 not honey, not the south ;
 ah flower of purple iris,
 flower of white,
 or of the iris, withering the grass —
 for fleck of the sun's fire,
 gathers such heat and power,
 that shadow-print is light,
 cast through the petals
 of the yellow iris flower ,
 not iris — old desire — old passion —
 old forgetfulness — old pain —
 not this, nor any flower,
 but if you turn again,
 seek strength of arm and throat,
 touch as the god ;
 neglect the lyre-note ;
 knowing that you shall feel,
 about the frame,
 no trembling of the string
 but heat, more passionate
 of bone and the white shell
 and fiery tempered steel.

E V A D N E

I first tasted under Apollo's lips
 love and love sweetness,
 I Evadne ;
 my hair is made of crisp violets
 or hyacinth which the wind combs back
 across some rock shelf ;
 I Evadne
 was mate of the god of light.

His hair was crisp to my mouth
as the flower of the crocus,
across my cheek,
cool as the silver cress
on Eros bank ;
between my chin and throat
his mouth slipped over and over.

Still between my arm and shoulder,
I feel the brush of his hair,
and my hands keep the gold they took
as they wandered over and over
that great arm-full of yellow flowers.

CENTAUR SONG

Now that the day is done,
now that the night creeps soft
and dims the chestnut clusters'
radiant spike of flower,
O sweet, till dawn
break through the branches
of our orchard-garden,
rest in this shelter
of the osier-wood and thorn.

They fall,
the apple-flowers ;
nor softer grace has Aphrodite
in the heaven afar,
nor at so fair a pace
open the flower-petals
as your face bends down,
while, breath on breath,
your mouth wanders
from my mouth o'er my face.

What have I left
to bring you in this place,
already sweet with violets ?
(those you brought
with swathes of earliest grass,
forest and meadow balm,
flung from your giant arms
for us to rest upon.)

Fair are these petals
broken by your feet ;

your horse's hooves
tread softer than a deer's ;
your eyes, startled,
are like the deer eyes
while your heart
trembles more than the deer.

O earth, O god,
O forest, stream or river,
what shall I bring
that all the day hold back,
that Dawn remember Love
and rest upon her bed,
and Zeus, forgetful not of Danae or Maia,
bid the stars shine forever.

William Rose Benét [1886—

THE FUGITIVE

The little foxes in their holes
Slumber curled, as the moon goes by.
The running winds are like fleet foals
That follow a leader up the sky.
The stars are like a chime of bells
Ringing, swinging from west to east.
The foxes doze and dream of smells
And barbarous, beatific feast.

The night within the wood is dark,
Blind as the treacherous mind of man.
All savage things that crouch to hark
Forget wherefore they cried and ran.
The cruel heart of nature sleeps,
But over the hill the soul is blown
To azure heights and infinite deeps
Where stars like sparkling seed are sown.

I would be running with the wind
Afar from lives that murder lives,
Up the steep air where thought is thinned
In the keen cold that cuts like knives ;
I would be buffeted, blown apart,
Lost and absorbed in space and height ;
Out of the body, brain and heart,
One with the ecstasy of light.

But tethered are the feet that start,
 Fast tethered is the mind that strains.
 The beat of your relentless heart
 Will only pay your soul with pains.
 The blank ironic day will break.
 Time will outwag all other clocks.
 So fall, and may your laughter shake
 A chill into the stoic rocks !

FALCON

Whose eyes have pierced that tragic East
 Where a miraculous sun ascends,
 Whose flight has hovered above that feast
 The lion makes, with lesser friends.

Whose scimitar wings through darkness break,
 Through icy cold and gold of dawn
 To slant across a lilyed lake
 And sheathe upon a lilac lawn, —

Proud flier, I can read aright
 The bleak, keen brightness in your eyes,
 Though cruel wings hunt down the height,
 Curved talons track the cruel skies.

Buzzard and vulture linger low
 To tear man's heart, but higher, higher
 Into a zenith light you go
 Unguessed of kite or lammergeier ;

And here, upon my shoulder set,
 Unhooded, freer than aught that flies,
 You bring the heavens' star-spangled net
 Tailed from your beak to blind my eyes ;

So only since your pride is mine,
 Your love of all things wild and fleet,
 With golden and with crimson twine
 I tie these bells about your feet.

ETERNAL MASCULINE

Neither will I put myself forward as others may do,
 Neither, if you wish me to flatter, will I flatter you ;
 I will look at you grimly, and so you will know I am true.

Neither when all do agree and lout low and salute,
 And you are beguiled by the tree and devout for the fruit,
 Will I seem to be aught but the following eyes of a brute.

I will stand to one side and sip of my hellebore wine,
 I will snarl and deride the antics and airs of the swine ;
 You will glance in your pride, but I will deny you a sign.

I will squint at the moon and be peaceful because I am dead,
 I will whistle a tune and be glad of the harshness I said.
O you will come soon, when the stars are a mist overhead !

You will come, with eyes fierce ; you will act a defiant surprise.
 Quick lightings will pierce to our hearts from the pain in our eyes,
 Standing strained and averse, with the trembling of love that defies.

And then I will know, by the heartbreaking turn of your head,
 My madness brought low in a hell that is spared to the dead.
 The upas will grow from the poisonous words that I said ;

From under its shade out to where like a statue you stand,
 Without wish to evade, I will reach, I will cry with my hand,
 With my spirit dismayed, with my eyes and my mouth full of
 sand. . . .

THE FAWN IN THE SNOW

The brown-dappled fawn
 Bereft of the doe
 Shivers in blue shadow
 Of the glaring snow,

His whole world bright
 As a jewel, and hard,
 Diamond white,
 Turquoise barred.

The trees are black,
 Their needles gold,
 Their boughs crack
 In the keen cold.

The brown-dappled fawn
 Bereft of the doe
 Trembles and shudders
 At the bright snow.

The air whets
 The warm throat,

The frost frets
At the smooth coat.

Brown agate eyes
Opened round
Agonize
At the cold ground,

At the cold heaven
Enameled pale,
At the earth shriven
By the snowy gale,

At magic glitter
Burning to blind,
At beauty bitter
As an almond rind.

Fawn, fawn,
Seek for your south,
For kind dawn
With her cool mouth,

For green sod
With gold and blue
Dappled, as God
Has dappled you,

For slumbrous ease,
Firm turf to run
Through fruited trees
Into full sun !

The shivering fawn
Paws at the snow.
South and dawn
Lie below ;

Richness and mirth,
Dearth forgiven,
A happy earth,
A warm heaven.

The sleet streams ;
The snow flies ;
The fawn dreams
With wide brown eyes.

THE OLD ADAM

All night rain fell,
 All night unwound a heavy glistening skein.
 Two slept well
 Beneath thick leafage curtained by the rain.

All night wind blew unending,
 All night pursued the same despairing themes —
 Triumphal music blending
 With love's triumphant dreams.

All night the forest crept
 With stealthy life and little lantered eyes ;
 All night rain wept,
 A wild wind roared, and deep in Paradise,
 Flame-sentined, high-walled,
 The corpse-cold serpent crawled.

Two slept. Toward morning
 Eve murmured, Adam woke
 And comfortingly spoke,
 Then — open-eyed —
 Recalled it all, — the Warning,
 The strange Beguiling,
 The Word defied,
 The Exile that ensued. . . .

And so lay smiling,
 His heart held breathless with beatitude.

WE ASK NO SHIELD

No shield against our crying griefs,
 Our sudden rages, black beliefs,
 We boast, — but in default of shield
 A tragic candor stands revealed
 We would not change for any targe.
 Let Time's dark archers loose at large
 Their quarrels in a whistling press, —
 They cannot shake this steadfastness !

Often as fools amazed we cried
 For pain, and would have turned and died ;
 And still as fools amazed we play
 Ironic parts on many a day,
 Yet something adamant in us
 Confronts with scorn the ominous ;

Bright in our eyes its laughter springs,
Wild through our blood its triumph sings.

Strike me to earth — but I will rise
With this same earnest in my eyes ;
You cannot slay yourself in me,
Nor I — to all eternity —
Destroy my truest self in you.
All that our ingrate thought would do,
All senseless wounds we give and take,
Are powerless — for the other's sake.

We ask no shield against our griefs
Though shadowy arrows fly in sheafs.
Hand in hand is gripping hard
Though all black heaven be thunder-barred ;
Eyes on eyes are burning clear
Though Hecate and her hound be here.
No futile, human, vain distress
Avails to shake our steadfastness !

THE WOODCUTTER'S WIFE

Times she 'll sit quiet by the hearth, and times
She 'll ripple with a fit of twinkling rhymes
And rise and pirouette and flirt her hand,
Strut jackdaw-like, or stamp a curt command
Or, from behind my chair, suddenly blind me ;
Then, when I turn, be vanished from behind me.

Times she 'll be docile as the gentlest thing
That ever blinked in fur or folded wing,
And then, like lightning in the dead of night,
Fill with wild, crackling, intermitting light
My mind and soul and senses, — and next be
Aloof, askance as a dryad in a tree.

Then she 'll be gone for days ; when next I turn,
There, coaxing yellow butter from the churn,
Rubbing to silver every pan of tin,
Or conjuring color from the rooms within
Through innocent flowers, she 'll hum about the house
Bright-eyed and secret as a velvet mouse.

'T is not your will They do, — no, nor the Will
That hushes Anselm's chapel overhill.
Something that drifts in clouds, that sings in rain,
That laughs in sunlight, shudders in the pain

Of desolate seas, or broods in basking earth
Governs Their melancholy and Their mirth.

Elusive still! Elusive as my reason
For trudging Woodward in or out of season
To swing the ringing ax, as year by year
The inexplicable end draws slowly near,
And, in between, to think and think about it,—
Life's puzzling dream, — deride, believe, and doubt it.

But if I leave her seriously alone
She comes quite near, preëmpts some woodland stone,
Spreads out her kirtle like a shimmering dress
And fills my mind's remorseful emptiness
With marvelous jewels made of words and wit
Till all my being sings because of it,

Sings of the way her bronze hair waves about
And her amber-lighted eyes peer out;
Sings of her sudden laughter floating wild,
Of all her antics of a fairy child,
Of her uplifted head and swift, demure
Silence and awe, than purity more pure.

So I must scratch my head and drop my ax,
While in her hands my will is twisted wax;
So when she goes, deaf, dumb and blind I sit
Watching her empty arm-chair opposite,
Witched by evasive brightness in the brain
That grows full glory when she comes again.

Robinson Jeffers

[1887—]

NIGHT

The ebb slips from the rock, the sunken
Tide-rocks lift streaming shoulders
Out of the slack, the slow west
Sombering its torch; a ship's light
Shows faintly, far out,
Over the weight of the prone ocean
On the low cloud.

Over the dark mountain, over the dark pinewood,
Down the long dark valley along the shrunken river,
Returns the splendor without rays, the shining of shadow,
Peace-bringer, the matrix of all shining and quieter of shining.

Where the shore widens on the bay she opens dark wings
 And the ocean accepts her glory. O soul worshipful of her
 You like the ocean have grave depths where she dwells always,
 And the film of waves above that takes the sun takes also
 Her, with more love. The sun-lovers have a blond favorite,
 A father of lights and noises, wars, weeping and laughter,
 Hot labor, lust and delight and the other blemishes. Quietness
 Flows from her deeper fountain; and he will die; and she is
 immortal.

Far off from here the slender
 Flocks of the mountain forest
 Move among stems like towers
 Of the old redwoods to the stream,
 No twig crackling; dip shy
 Wild muzzles into the mountain water
 Among the dark ferns.

O passionately at peace you being secure will pardon
 The blasphemies of glowworms, the lamp in my tower, the fretfulness
 Of cities, the crescents of the planets, the pride of the stars.
 This August night in a rift of cloud Antares reddens,
 The great one, the ancient torch, a lord among lost children,
 The earth's orbit doubled would not girdle his greatness, one fire
 Globed, out of grasp of the mind enormous; but to you O Night
 What? Not a spark? What flicker of a spark in the faint far
 glimmer
 Of a lost fire dying in the desert, dim coals of a sand-pit the Bedouins
 Wandered from at dawn . . . Ah singing prayer to what gulfs
 tempted
 Suddenly are you more lost? To us the near-hand mountain
 Be a measure of height, the tide-worn cliff at the sea-gate a measure
 of continuance.

The tide, moving the night's
 Vastness with lonely voices,
 Turns, the deep dark-shining
 Pacific leans on the land,
 Feeling his cold strength
 To the outmost margins: you Night will resume
 The stars in your time.

O passionately at peace when will that tide draw shoreward?
 Truly the spouting fountains of light, Antares, Arcturus,
 Tire of their flow, they sing one song but they think silence.
 The striding winter giant Orion shines, and dreams darkness.
 And life, the flicker of men and moths and the wolf on the hill,
 Though furious for continuance, passionately feeding, passionately

Remaking itself upon its mates, remembers deep inward
 The calm mother, the quietness of the womb and the egg,
 The primal and the latter silences: dear Night it is memory
 Prophesies, prophecy that remembers, the charm of the dark.
 And I and my people, we are willing to love the four-score years
 Heartily; but as a sailor loves the sea, when the helm is for harbor.

Have men's minds changed,
 Or the rock hidden in the deep of the waters of the soul
 Broken the surface? A few centuries
 Gone by, was none dared not to people
 The darkness beyond the stars with harps and habitations.
 But now, dear is the truth. Life is grown sweeter and lonelier,
 And death is no evil.

BIRDS

The fierce musical cries of a couple of sparrowhawks hunting on the headland,
 Hovering and darting, their heads northwestward,
 Prick like silver arrows shot through a curtain the noise of the ocean
 Trampling its granite; their red backs gleam
 Under my window around the stone corners; nothing gracefuller,
 nothing
 Nimbler in the wind. Westward the wave-gleaners,
 The old gray sea-going gulls are gathered together, the northwest
 wind wakening
 Their wings to the wild spirals of the wind-dance.
 Fresh as the air, salt as the foam, play birds in the bright wind, fly
 falcons
 Forgetting the oak and the pinewood, come gulls
 From the Carmel sands and the sands at the river-mouth, from
 Lobos and out of the limitless
 Power of the mass of the sea, for a poem
 Needs multitude, multitudes of thoughts, all fierce, all flesh-eaters.
 musically clamorous
 Bright hawks that hover and dart headlong, and ungainly
 Gray hungers fledged with desire of transgression, salt slimed beaks,
 from the sharp
 Rock-shores of the world and the secret waters.

HAUNTED COUNTRY

Here the human past is dim and feeble and alien to us
 Our ghosts draw from the crowded future.
 Fixed as the past how could it fail to drop weird shadows
 And make strange murmurs about twilight?

In the dawn twilight metal falcons flew over the mountain,
 Multitudes, and faded in the air; at moonrise
 The farmer's girl by the still river is afraid of phantoms,
 Hearing the pulse of a great city
 Move on the water-meadow and stream off south; the country's
 Children for all their innocent minds
 Hide dry and bitter lights in the eye, they dream without knowing it
 The inhuman years to be accomplished,
 The inhuman powers, the servile cunning under pressure,
 In a land grown old, heavy and crowded.
 There are happy places that fate skips; here is not one of them;
 The tides of the brute womb, the excess
 And weight of life spilled out like water, the last migration
 Gathering against this holier valley-mouth
 That knows its fate beforehand, the flow of the womb, banked back
 By the older flood of the ocean, to swallow it.

CONTINENT'S END

At the equinox when the earth was veiled in a late rain, wreathed
 with wet poppies, waiting spring,
 The ocean swelled for a far storm and beat its boundary, the ground-
 swell shook the beds of granite.

I gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray, the established
 sea-marks, felt behind me
 Mountain and plain, the immense breadth of the continent, before
 me the mass and doubled stretch of water.

I said: You yoke the Aleutian seal-rocks with the lava and coral
 sowings that flower the south,
 Over your flood the life that sought the sunrise faces ours that has
 followed the evening star.

The long migrations meet across you and it is nothing to you, you
 have forgotten us, mother.

You were much younger when we crawled out of the womb and
 lay in the sun's eye on the tideline.

It was long and long ago; we have grown proud since then and
 you have grown bitter; life retains
 Your mobile soft unquiet strength; and envies hardness, the
 insolent quietness of stone.

The tides are in our veins, we still mirror the stars, life is your child,
 but there is in me
 Older and harder than life and more impartial, the eye that watched
 before there was an ocean.

That watched you fill your beds out of the condensation of thin vapor and watched you change them,
 That saw you soft and violent wear your boundaries down, eat rock, shift places with the continents.

Mother, though my song's measure is like your surf-beat's ancient rhythm I never learned it of you.

Before there was any water there were tides of fire, both our tones flow from the older fountain.

FAWN'S FOSTER-MOTHER

The old woman sits on a bench before the door and quarrels
 With her meager pale demoralized daughter.
 Once when I passed I found her alone, laughing in the sun
 And saying that when she was first married.
 She lived in the old farmhouse up Garapatas Canyon.
 (It is empty now, the roof has fallen
 But the log walls hang on the stone foundation; the redwoods
 Have all been cut down, the oaks are standing;
 The place is now more solitary than ever before.)
 "When I was nursing my second baby
 My husband found a day-old fawn hid in a fern-brake
 And brought it; I put its mouth to the breast
 Rather than let it starve, I had milk enough for three babies.
 Hey, how it sucked, the little nuzzler,
 Digging its little hoofs like quills into my stomach.
 I had more joy from that than from the others."
 Her face is deformed with age, furrowed like a bad road
 With market-wagons, mean cares and decay.
 She is thrown up to the surface of things, a cell of dry skin
 Soon to be shed from the earth's old eye-brows,
 I see that once in her spring she lived in the streaming arteries,
 The stir of the world, the music of the mountain.

THE SUMMIT REDWOOD

Only stand high a long enough time your lightning will come: that is what blunts the peaks of redwoods:
 But this old tower of life on the hilltop has taken it more than twice a century, this knows in every Cell the salty and the burning taste, the shudder and the voice

The fire from heaven; it has felt the earth's too Roaring up hill in autumn, thorned oak-leaves tossing their bright rain to the bitter laurel-leaves, and all

Its under-forest had died and died, and lives to be burnt; the redwood has lived. Though the fire entered,
 It cored the trunk while the sapwood increased. The trunk is a tower, the bole of the trunk is a black cavern,
 The mast of the trunk with its green boughs the mountain stars are strained through
 Is like the helmet-spike on the highest head of an army; black on lit blue or hidden in cloud
 It is like the hill's finger in heaven. And when the cloud hides it, though in barren summer, the boughs
 Make their own rain.

Old Escobar had a cunning trick when he stole beef.
 He and his grandsons
 Would drive the cow up here to a starlight death and hoist the carcass into the tree's hollow,
 Then let them search his cabin, he could smile for pleasure, to think of his meat hanging secure
 Exalted over the earth and the ocean, a theft like a star, secret against the supreme sky.

ASCENT TO THE SIERRAS

Beyond the great valley an odd instinctive rising
 Begins to possess the ground, the flatness gathers to little humps and barrows, low aimless ridges,
 A sudden violence of rock crowns them. The crowded orchards end, they have come to a stone knife;
 The farms are finished; the sudden foot of the sierra. Hill over hill, snow-ridge beyond mountain gather
 The blue air of their height about them.

Here at the foot of the pass
 The fierce clans of the mountain you'd think for thousands of years, Men with harsh mouths and eyes like the eagles' hunger, Have gathered among these rocks at the dead hour Of the morning star and the stars waning To raid the plain and at moonrise returning driven Their scared booty to the highlands, the tossing horns And glazed eyes in the light of torches. The men have looked back Standing above these rock-heads to bark laughter At the burning granaries and the farms and the town That sow the dark flat land with terrible rubies . . . lighting the dead . . .

It is not true: from this land The curse was lifted; the highlands have kept peace with the valleys; no blood in the sod; there is no old sword

Keeping grim rust, no primal sorrow. The people are all one
 people, their homes never knew harrying;
 The tribes before them are acorn-eaters, harmless as deer. Oh,
 fortunate earth; you must find someone
 To make you bitter music; how else will you take bonds of the
 future, against the wolf in men's hearts?

BIXBY'S LANDING

They burned lime on the hill and dropped it down here in an iron car
 On a long cable; here the ships warped in
 And took their loads from the engine, the water is deep to the cliff.

The car

Hangs half way over in the gape of the gorge,
 Stationed like a north star above the peaks of the redwoods, iron
 perch
 For the little red hawks when they cease from hovering
 When they've struck prey; the spider's fling of a cable rust-glued to
 the pulleys.

The laborers are gone, but what a good multitude
 Is here in return: the rich-lichened rock, the rose-tipped stonecrop,
 the constant

Ocean's voices, the cloud-lighted space.

The kilns are cold on the hill but here in the rust of the broken
 boiler

Quick lizards lighten, and a rattlesnake flows
 Down the cracked masonry, over the crumbled fire-brick. In the
 rotting timbers

And roofless platforms all the free companies

Of windy grasses have root and make seed; wild buckwheat blooms
 in the fat

Weather-slacked lime from the bursted barrels.

Two duckhawks darting in the sky of their cliff-hung nest are the
 voice of the headland.

Wine-hearted solitude, our mother the wilderness,

Men's failures are often as beautiful as men's triumphs, but your
 returnings

Are even more precious than your first presence.

OCEAN

It dreams in the deepest sleep, it remembers the storm last month
 or it feels the far storm

Off Unalaska and the lash of the sea-rain.

It is never mournful but wise, and takes the magical misrule of the
 steep world

With strong tolerance, its depth is not moved
 From where the green sun fails to where the thin red clay lies on
 the basalt
 And there has never been light nor life.
 The black crystal, the untroubled fountain, the roots of endurance.

Therefore I belted
 The house and the tower and courtyard with stone,
 And have planted the naked foreland with future forest toward
 noon and morning: for it told me,
 The time I was gazing in the black crystal,
 To be faithful in storm, patient of fools, tolerant of memories and
 the muttering prophets,
 It is needful to have night in one's body.

HURT HAWKS

I

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted shoulder,
 The wing trails like a banner in defeat,
 No more to use the sky forever but live with famine
 And pain a few days: cat nor coyote
 Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is game without
 talons.
 He stands under the oak-bush and waits
 The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers freedom
 And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.
 He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity is worse.
 The curs of the day come and torment him
 At distance, no one but death the redeemer will humble that head,
 The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
 The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to those
 That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.
 You do not know him, you communal people, or you have for-
 gotten him;
 Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
 Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are dying, remember
 him.

II

I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk; but the
 great redtail
 Had nothing left but unable misery
 From the bone too shattered for mending, the wing that trailed
 under his talons when he moved.
 We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,

He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in the evening,
 asking for death,
Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old
Implacable arrogance. I gave him the lead gift in the twilight.
 What fell was relaxed,
Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what
Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the flooded river cried
 fear at its rising
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality.

APOLOGY FOR BAD DREAMS

I

In the purple light, heavy with redwood, the slopes drop seaward,
Headlong convexities of forest, drawn in together to the steep
 ravine. Below, on the sea-cliff,
A lonely clearing; a little field of corn by the streamside; a roof
 under spared trees. Then the ocean
Like a great stone some one has cut to a sharp edge and polished
 to shining. Beyond it, the fountain
And furnace of incredible light flowing up from the sunk sun. In
 the little clearing a woman
Was punishing a horse; she had tied the halter to a sapling at the
edge of the wood; but when the great whip
Clung to the flanks the creature kicked so hard she feared he would
 snap the halter; she called from the house
The young man her son; who fetched a chain tie-rope, they working
 together
Noosed the small rusty links round the horse's tongue
And tied him by the swollen tongue to the tree.
Seen from this height they are shrunk to insect size,
Out of all human relation. You cannot distinguish
The blood dripping from where the chain is fastened,
The beast shuddering; but the thrust neck and the legs
Far apart. You can see the whip fall on the flanks. . . .
The gesture of the arm. You cannot see the face of the woman.
The enormous light beats up out of the west across the cloud-bars
 of the trade-wind. The ocean
Darkens, the high clouds brighten, the hills darken together. Un-
 bridled and unbelievable beauty
Covers the evening world . . . not covers, grows apparent out
 of it, as Venus down there grows out
From the lit sky. What said the prophet? "I create good: and
 I create evil: I am the Lord."

II

This coast crying out for tragedy like all beautiful places,
 (The quiet ones ask for quieter suffering; but here the granite cliff
 the gaunt cypresses' crown
 Demands what victim? The dykes of red lava and black what
 Titan? The hills like pointed flames
 Beyond Soberanes, the terrible peaks of the bare hills under the
 sun, what immolation?)
 This coast crying out for tragedy like all beautiful places: and
 like the passionate spirit of humanity
 Pain for its bread: God's, many victims', the painful deaths,
 the horrible transfigurations: I said in my heart,
 "Better invent than suffer: imagine victims
 Lest your own flesh be chosen the agonist, or you
 Martyr some creature to the beauty of the place." And I said,
 "Burn sacrifices once a year to magic
 Horror away from the house, this little house here
 You have built over the ocean with your own hands
 Beside the standing bowlders: for what are we,
 The beast that walks upright, with speaking lips
 And little hair, to think we should always be fed,
 Sheltered, intact, and self-controlled? We sooner more liable
 Than the other animals. Pain and terror, the insanities of desire;
 not accidents, but esssential,
 And crowd up from the core." I imagined victims for those
 wolves, I made the phantoms to follow.
 They have hunted the phantoms and missed the house. It is not
 good to forget over what gulls the spirit
 Of the beauty of humanity, the petal of a lost flower blown seaward
 by the night-wind, floats to its quietness.

III

Bowlders blunted like an old bear's teeth break up from the head-
 land; below them
 All the soil is thick with shells, the tide-rock feasts of a dead people.
 Here the granite flanks are scarred with ancient fire, the ghosts
 of the tribe
 Crouch in the nights beside the ghost of a fire, they try to remember
 the sunlight,
 Light has died out of their skies. These have paid something for
 the future
 Luck of the country, while we living keep old griefs in memory:
 though God's
 Envy is not a likely fountain of ruin, to forget evil calls down
 Sudden reminders from the cloud: remembered deaths be our
 redeemers;

Imagined victims our salvation : white as the half moon at midnight
 Some one flamelike passed me, saying, "I am Tamar Cauldwell,
 I have my desire,"
 Then the voice of the sea returned, when she had gone by, the
 stars to their towers.
 . . . Beautiful country, burn again, Point Pinos down to the
 Sur Rivers
 Burn as before with bitter wonders, land and ocean and the Carmel
 water.

IV

He brays humanity in a mortar to bring the savor
 From the bruised root : a man having bad dreams, who invents
 victims, is only the ape of that God.
 He washes it out with tears and many waters, calcines it with fire
 in the red crucible,
 Deforms it, makes it horrible to itself : the spirit flies out and
 stands naked, he sees the spirit,
 He takes it in the naked ecstasy ; it breaks in his hand, the atom
 is broken, the power that massed it
 Cries to the power that moves the stars, "I have come home to
 myself, behold me.
 I bruised myself in the flint mortar and burnt me
 In the red shell, I tortured myself, I flew forth,
 Stood naked of myself and broke me in fragments,
 And here am I moving the stars that are me."
 I have seen these ways of God : I know of no reason
 For fire and change and torture and the old returnings.
 He being sufficient might be still. I think they admit no reason ;
 they are the ways of my love.
 Unmeasured power, incredible passion, enormous craft : no thought
 apparent but burns darkly
 Smothered with its own smoke in the human brain-vault : no
 thought outside : a certain measure in phenomena :
 The fountains of the boiling stars, the flowers on the foreland,
 the ever-returning roses of dawn.

Elinor Wylie

[1887-1928]

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
 Shun the polluted flock,
 Live like that stoic bird,
 The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
 Begets and fosters hate;
 He keeps, above the clouds,
 His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
 And herds to shelter run,
 He sails above the storm,
 He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
 Your sinews cannot leap,
 Avoid the lathered pack,
 Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
 From spotted sight or sound,
 Live like the velvet mole;
 Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
 With roots of trees and stones,
 With rivers at their source,
 And disembodied bones.

ESCAPE

When foxes eat the last gold grape,
 And the last white antelope is killed,
 I shall stop fighting and escape
 Into a little house I 'll build.

But first I 'll shrink to a fairy size,
 With a whisper no one understands,
 Making blind moons of all your eyes,
 And muddy roads of all your hands.

And you may grope for me in vain
 In hollows under the mangrove root,
 Or where, in apple-scented rain,
 The silver wasp-nests hang like fruit.

PROPHETY

I shall lie hidden in a hut
 In the middle of an alder wood,
 With the back door blind and bolted shut,
 And the front door locked for good.

I shall lie folded like a saint,
 Lapped in a scented linen sheet,
 On a bedstead striped with bright-blue paint,
 Narrow and cold and neat.

The midnight will be glassy black
 Behind the panes, with wind about
 To set his mouth against a crack
 And blow the candle out.

LET NO CHARITABLE HOPE

Now let no charitable hope
 Confuse my mind with images
 Of eagle and of antelope :
 I am in nature none of these.

I was, being human, born alone ;
 I am, being woman, hard beset ;
 I live by squeezing from a stone
 The little nourishment I get.

In masks outrageous and austere
 The years go by in single file ;
 But none has merited my fear,
 And none has quite escaped my smile.

TRUE VINE

There is a serpent in perfection tarnished,
 The thin shell pierced, the purity grown fainter,
 The virgin silver shield no longer burnished,
 The pearly fruit with ruin for its centre.

The thing that sits expectant in our bosoms
 Contriving heaven out of very little
 Demands such delicate immaculate blossoms
 As no malicious verity makes brittle.

This wild fastidious hope is quick to languish ;
 Its smooth diaphanous escape is swifter
 Than the pack of truth ; no mortal can distinguish
 Its trace upon the durable hereafter.

Not so the obdurate and savage lovely
 Whose roots are set profoundly upon trouble ;
 This flower grows so fiercely and so bravely
 It does not even know that it is noble.

This is the vine to love, whose balsams flourish
Upon a living soil corrupt and faulty,
Whose leaves have drunk the skies, and stooped to nourish
The earth again with honey sweet and salty.

ADDRESS TO MY SOUL

My soul, be not disturbed
By planetary war;
Remain securely orb'd
In this contracted star.

Fear not, pathetic flame;
Your sustenance is doubt:
Glassed in translucent dream
They cannot snuff you out.

Wear water, or a mask
Of unapparent cloud;
Be brave and never ask
A more defunctive shroud.

The universal points
Are shrunk into a flower;
Between its delicate joints
Chaos keeps no power.

The pure integral form,
Austere and silver-dark,
Is balanced on the storm
In its predestined arc.

Small as a sphere of rain
It slides along the groove
Whose path is furrowed plain
Among the suns that move.

The shapes of April buds
Outlive the phantom year:
Upon the void at odds
The dewdrop falls severe.

Five-petalled flame, be cold:
Be firm, dissolving star:
Accept the stricter mould
That makes you singular.

T. S. Eliot

[1888-]

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
 You have the scene arrange itself — as it will seem to do —
 With “I have saved this afternoon for you”;
 And four wax candles in the darkened room,
 Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
 An atmosphere of Juliet’s tomb
 Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.
 We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
 Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.
 “So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
 Should be resurrected only among friends
 Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
 That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room.”

— And so the conversation slips
 Among velleities and carefully caught regrets
 Through attenuated tones of violins
 Mingled with remote cornets
 And begins.

“You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends,
 And how, how rare and strange it is, to find
 In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends
 (For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? You are not blind!
 How keen you are!)
 To find a friend who has these qualities,
 Who has, and gives
 Those qualities upon which friendship lives.
 How much it means that I say this to you —
 Without these friendships — life, what *cauchemar!*”

Among the windings of the violins
 And the ariettes
 Of cracked cornets
 Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
 Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,
 Capricious monotone
 That is at least one definite “false note.”

— Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,
 Admire the monuments
 Discuss the late events,
 Correct our watches by the public clocks.
 Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
 She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
 And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
 "Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know
 What life is, you should hold it in your hands";
 (Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
 "You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
 And youth is cruel, and has no remorse
 And smiles at situations which it cannot see."

I smile, of course,
 And go on drinking tea.

"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
 My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,
 I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
 To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
 Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
 "I am always sure that you understand
 My feelings, always sure that you feel,
 Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.
 You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
 You will go on, and when you have prevailed
 You can say: at this point many a one has failed.

"But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
 To give you, what can you receive from me?
 Only the friendship and the sympathy
 Of one about to reach her journey's end.
 I shall sit here, serving tea to friends. . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
 For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park
 Reading the comics and the sporting page.
 Particularly I remark
 An English countess goes upon the stage.
 A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance.
 Another bank defaulter has confessed.
 I keep my countenance,
 I remain self-possessed
 Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired,
 Reiterates some worn-out common song
 With the smell of hyacinths across the garden,
 Recalling things that other people have desired.
 Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down; returning as before
 Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease
 I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
 And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?
 But that's a useless question.
 You hardly know when you are coming back;
 You will find so much to learn."
 My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."
 My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned.
 "I have been wondering frequently of late.
 (But our beginnings never know our ends!)
 Why we have not developed into friends."
 I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark
 Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
 My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
 They all were sure our feelings would relate
 So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
 We must leave it now to fate.
 You will write, at any rate.
 Perhaps it is not too late.
 I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape
 To find expression . . . dance, dance
 Like a dancing bear,
 Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape. . . .
 Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance —
 Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
 Afternoon gray and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
 Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
 With the smoke coming down above the housetops;
 Doubtful, for quite a while
 Not knowing what to feel or if I understand
 Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .
 Would she not have the advantage, after all?
 This music is successful with a "dying fall"
 Now that we talk of dying —
 And should I have the right to smile?

RAPSODY ON A WINDY NIGHT

Twelve o'clock.

Along the reaches of the street
 Held in a lunar synthesis,
 Whispering lunar incantations
 Dissolve the floors of memory
 And all its clear relations,
 Its divisions and precisions,
 Every street lamp that I pass
 Beats like a fatalistic drum,
 And through the spaces of the dark
 Midnight shakes the memory
 As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,

The street-lamp sputtered,
 The street-lamp muttered,
 The street-lamp said, "Regard that woman
 Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
 Which opens on her like a grin.
 You see the border of her dress
 Is torn and stained with sand,
 And you see the corner of her eye
 Twists like a crooked pin."

The memory throws up high and dry

A crowd of twisted things ;
 A twisted branch upon the beach
 Eaten smooth, and polished
 As if the world gave up
 The secret of its skeleton,
 Stiff and white.
 A broken spring in a factory yard,
 Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left
 Hard and curled and ready to snap.

Half-past two,

The street-lamp said,
 "Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
 Slips out its tongue
 And devours a morsel of rancid butter."
 So the hand of the child, automatic,
 Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the quay
 I could see nothing behind that child's eye.
 I have seen eyes in the street
 Trying to peer through lighted shutters,

And a crab one afternoon in a pool,
 An old crab with barnacles on his back,
 Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,
 The lamp sputtered,
 The lamp muttered in the dark.
 The lamp hummed :
 "Regard the moon,
 La lune ne garde aucune rancune,
 She winks a feeble eye,
 She smiles into corners.
 She smooths the hair of the grass.
 The moon has lost her memory.
 A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,
 Her hand twists a paper rose,
 That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,
 She is alone
 With all the old nocturnal smells
 That cross and cross across her brain."
 The reminiscence comes
 Of sunless dry geraniums
 And dust in crevices,
 Smells of chestnuts in the streets,
 And female smells in shuttered rooms,
 And cigarettes in corridors
 And cocktail smells in bars.

The lamp said,
 "Four o'clock,
 Here is the number on the door.
 Memory !
 You have the key,
 The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair,
 Mount.
 The bed is open ; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,
 Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life."
 The last twist of the knife.

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
 And along the trampled edges of the street
 I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
 Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
 Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
 And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
 An aimless smile that hovers in the air
 And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

GERONTION

*Thou hast nor youth nor age
 But as it were an after dinner sleep
 Dreaming of both.*

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
 Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
 I was neither at the hot gates
 Nor fought in the warm rain
 Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
 Bitten by flies, fought.
 My house is a decayed house,
 And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,
 Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
 Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.
 The goat coughs at night in the field overhead ;
 Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.
 The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
 Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.

I an old man,

A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. "We would see a sign":
 The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
 Swaddled with darkness. In the juvenescence of the year
 Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,
 To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
 Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero
 With caressing hands, at Limoges
 Who walked all night in the next room;
 By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;
 By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
 Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp
 Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles
 Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,
 An old man in a draughty house
 Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
 History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
 And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
 Guides us by vanities. Think now
 She gives when our attention is distracted
 And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
 That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
 What's not believed in, or if still believed,
 In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
 Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
 Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think
 Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices
 Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
 Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.
 These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at last
 We have not reached conclusion, when I
 Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last
 I have not made this show purposelessly
 And it is not by any concitation
 Of the backward devils.
 I would meet you upon this honestly.
 I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
 To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
 I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
 Since what is kept must be adulterated?
 I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
 How should I use it for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations
 Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
 Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
 With pungent sauces, multiply variety
 In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,
 Suspend its operations, will the weevil
 Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled
 Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear
 In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits
 Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,
 White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,
 And an old man driven by the Trades
 To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,
 Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

The broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud ;
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh-and-blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock ;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree ;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep ; at night he hunts ;
God works in a mysterious way —
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,
While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES

Why should I speak of the nightingale? The nightingale sings of adulterous wrong.

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward to the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee cup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges,
Bananas, figs and hot-house grapes;

The silent vertebrate exhales,
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
 When Agamemnon cried aloud,
 And let their liquid siftings fall
 To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

John Crowe Ransom [1888-]

BELLS FOR JOHN WHITESIDES' DAUGHTER

There was such speed in her little body,
 And such lightness in her footfall,
 It is no wonder that her brown study
 Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
 We looked among orchard trees and beyond,
 Where she took arms against her shadow,
 Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
 Dripping their snow on the green grass,
 Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
 Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
 Lady with rod that made them rise
 From their noon apple-dreams, and scuttle
 Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready ;
 In one house we are sternly stopped
 To say we are vexed at her brown study,
 Lying so primly propped.

HERE LIES A LADY

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
 Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
 The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three,
 And of medicos marvelling sweetly on her ills.

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would blaze,
 And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads —
 What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat in a maze
 Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds —

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
 Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white and blown,

And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine ;
The sixth of these states was her last ; the cold settled down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may thole,
But was she not lucky ? In flowers and lace and mourning,
In love and great honour we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

NECROLOGICAL

The friar had said his paternosters duly
And scourged his limbs, and afterwards would have slept ;
But with much riddling his head became unruly,
He arose, from the quiet monastery he crept.

Dawn lightened the place where the battle had been won.
The people were dead — it is easy, he thought, to die —
These dead remained, but the living all were gone,
Gone with the wailing trumps of victory.

The dead men wore no raiment against the air,
Bartholomew's men had spoiled them where they fell ;
In defeat the heroes' bosoms were whitely bare,
The field was white like meads of asphodel.

Not all were white ; some gory and fabulous
Whom the sword had pierced and then the grey wolf eaten ;
But the brother reasoned that heroes' flesh was thus,
Flesh fails, and the postured bones lie weather-beaten.

The lords of chivalry were prone and shattered,
The gentle and the body-guard of yeomen ;
Bartholomew's stroke went home — but little it mattered,
Bartholomew went to be stricken of other foemen.

Beneath the blue ogive of the firmament
Was a dead warrior, clutching whose mighty knees
Was a leman, who with her flame had warmed his tent,
For him enduring all men's pleasantries.

Close by the sable stream that purged the plain
Lay the white stallion and his rider thrown.
The great beast had spilled there his little brain,
And the little groin of the knight was spilled by a stone.

The youth possessed him then of a crooked blade
Deep in the belly of a lugubrious knight ;
He fingered it well, and it was cunningly made ;
But strange apparatus was it for a Carmelite.

Then he sat upon a hill and hung his head,
Riddling, riddling, and lost in a vast surmise,
And so still that he likened himself unto those dead
Whom the kites of Heaven solicited with sweet cries.

EPI TAPH

Napoleon took many captures and is dead,
Julius brought unto Rome many victories,
Nor did Alexander expire on a wastrel's bed ;
But this was a somewhat greater captain than these.

He took a city too, O Eminences.
It was a city reared stubborn against a foe,
Furnished it was with no frail few defences,
But it fell to the intrepid Generalissimo.

Its two towers compacted of a tough masonry,
The right tower squat against the thunderbolts of Heaven,
The left tower sheer on the brink like a mighty tree
From the bottom of Hell, and terrible to the craven.

He was a lone besieger of a grim defence,
He was scarred, and weary of circling it round after round,
He battered incessantly upon its fundaments,
At last he bestrode it thundering to the ground.

A lone besieger, so Cæsar's ghost had said,
Leading no soldiers ; but he had known black magic,
And mustered invisible regiments to his aid,
For he triumphed ; and the envious Cæsars took it as tragic.

CAPTAIN CARPENTER

Captain Carpenter rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But had got wellnigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout.

It was a pretty lady and all her train
That played with him so sweetly but before
An hour she'd taken a sword with all her main
And twined him of his nose for evermore.

Captain Carpenter mounted up one day
And rode straightway into a stranger rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as it may
The Captain did not wait upon prologue.

But drew upon him out of his great heart
 The other swung against him with a club
 And cracked his two legs at the shinny part
 And let him roll and stick like any tub.

Captain Carpenter rode many a time
 From male and female took he sundry harms
 He met the wife of Satan crying "I'm
 The she-wolf bids you shall bear no more arms."

Their strokes and counters whistled in the wind
 I wish he had delivered half his blows
 But where she should have made off like a hind
 The bitch bit off his arms at the elbows.

And Captain Carpenter parted with his ears
 To a black devil that used him in this wise
 O Jesus ere his threescore and ten years
 Another had plucked out his sweet blue eyes.

Captain Carpenter got up on his roan
 And sallied from the gate in hell's despite
 I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
 If any enemy yet there was to fight?

"To any adversary it is fame
 If he risk to be wounded by my tongue
 Or burnt in two beneath my red heart's flame
 Such are the perils he is cast among.

"But if he can he has a pretty choice
 From an anatomy with little to lose
 Whether he cut my tongue and take my voice
 Or whether it be my round red heart he choose."

It was the neatest knave that ever was seen
 Stepping in perfume from his lady's bower
 Who at this word put in his merry mien
 And fell on Captain Carpenter like a tower.

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
 But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
 His weapons were the old heart in his bust
 And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack.

The rogue in scarlet and gray soon knew his mind
 He wished to get his trophy and depart;
 With gentle apology and touch refined
 He pierced him and produced the Captain's heart.

God's mercy rest on Captain Carpenter now
 I thought him Sirs an honest gentleman
 Citizen husband soldier and scholar enow
 Let jangling kites eat of him if they can.

But God's deep curses follow after those
 That shore him of his goodly nose and ears
 His legs and strong arms at the two elbows
 And eyes that had not watered seventy years.

The curse of hell upon the sleek upstart
 Who got the Captain finally on his back
 And took the red red vitals of his heart
 And made the kites to whet their beaks clack clack.

PIAZZA PIECE

— I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying
 To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small
 And listen to an old man not at all ;
 They want the young men's whispering and sighing.
 But see the roses on your trellis dying
 And hear the spectral singing of the moon —
 For I must have my lovely lady soon.
 I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.

— I am a lady young in beauty waiting
 Until my true love comes, and then we kiss.
 But what gray man among the vines is this
 Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream ?
 Back from my trellis, sir, before I scream !
 I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I have seen, O, the miller's daughter
 And on her neck a coral necklace lies
 And yellow glint of corn is in her eyes
 Which are a blue stillwater.

The strange miller hath strange daughter
 For he is pink and painfully doth walk
 And life demandeth of them little talk
 Beside the small millwater.

At candlelight I hear she goes
 And on a bed of snow like snow she lies
 Yet warmer much and lids her sleepy eyes.
 Long lies the tall white tower which uprose.

At daylight some vague bird
 Tinkles his little bell and she comes down
 Coiling her hair as queens would coil a crown.
 Yet queens are too absurd.

And so am I, poor bookish hind,
 Who come by fabulous roads around the hill
 To bring the famous daughter of the mill
 No combs to sell, no corn to grind,

But too much pudding in my head
 Of learned characters and scraps of love
 Which O that she might peck at (dainty dove !)
 And words vain to be said.

What then to do but stare —
 A learned eye of our most Christian nation
 And foremost philosophical generation —
 At primary chrome of hair,

Astronomied Oes of eyes
 And the white moons I tremble to behold
 (More than my books did shake me, or a tale told)
 And all her parts likewise.

She dwells beside a water,
 She counts the bins and ties the sacks pardee
 And cleaves my closest thought, and is to me
 A long-dreamt miller's daughter.

TWO IN AUGUST

Two that could not have lived their single lives
 As can some husbands and wives
 Did something strange : they tensed their vocal chords
 And attacked each other with silences and words
 Like catapulted stones and arrowed knives.

Dawn was not yet ; night is for loving or sleeping,
 Sweet dreams or safekeeping ;
 Yet he of the wide brows that were used to laurel
 And she, the famed for gentleness, must quarrel,
 Furious both of them, and scared, and weeping.

How sleepers groan, twitch, wake to such a mood
 Is not well understood,
 Nor why two entities grown almost one
 Should rend and murder trying to get undone,
 With individual tigers in their blood.

In spring's luxuriant weather had the bridal
 Transpired, nor had the growing parts been idle,
 Nor was it easily dissolved;
 Therefore they tugged but were still interwolved,
 With pain prodigious. The exploit was suicidal.

She in terror fled from the marriage chamber
 Circuiting the dark room like a string of amber
 Round and round and back,
 And would not light one lamp against the black,
 And heard the clock that clanged: Remember, Remember.

And he must tread barefooted the dim lawn,
 Soon he was up and gone;
 High in the trees the night-mastered birds were crying
 With fear upon their tongues, no singing nor flying
 Which are their lovely attitudes by dawn.

Whether those bird-cries were of heaven or hell
 There is no way to tell;
 In the long ditch of darkness the man walked
 Under the hackberry trees where the birds talked
 With words too sad and strange to syllable.

ANTIQUE HARVESTERS

(*Scene : Of the Mississippi the bank sinister,
 and of the Ohio the bank sinister*)

Tawny are the leaves turned, but they still hold.
 It is the harvest; what shall this land produce?
 A meager hill of kernels, a runnel of juice.
 Declension looks from our land, it is old.
 Therefore let us assemble, dry, gray, spare,
 And mild as yellow air.

"I hear the creak of a raven's funeral wing."
 The young men would be joying in the song
 Of passionate birds; their memories are not long.
 What is it thus rehearsed in sable? "Nothing."
 Trust not but the old endure, and shall be older
 Than the scornful beholder.

We pluck the spindling ears and gather the corn.
 One spot has special yield? "On this spot stood
 Heroes and drenched it with their only blood."
 And talk meets talk, as echoes from the horn
 Of the hunter — echoes are the old men's arts,
 Ample are the chambers of their hearts.

Here-come the hunters, keepers of a rite.
 The horn, the hounds, the lank mares coursing by
 Under quaint archetypes of chivalry ;
 And the fox, lovely ritualist, in flight
 Offering his unearthly ghost to quarry ;
 And the fields, themselves to harry.

Resume, harvesters. The treasure is full bronze
 Which you will garner for the Lady, and the moon
 Could tinge it no yellower than does this noon ;
 But the gray will quench it shortly — the fields, men, stones.
 Pluck fast, dreamers ; prove as you rumble slowly
 Not less than men, not wholly.

Bare the arm too, dainty youths, bend the knees
 Under bronze burdens. And by an autumn tone
 As by a gray, as by a green, you will have known
 Your famous Lady's image ; for so have these.
 And if one say that easily will your hands
 More prosper in other lands,

Angry as wasp-music be your cry then :
 "Forsake the Proud Lady, of the heart of fire,
 The look of snow, to the praise of a dwindled choir,
 Song of degenerate specters that were men ?
 The sons of the fathers shall keep her, worthy of
 What these have done in love."

True, it is said of our Lady, she ageth.
 But see, if you peep shrewdly, she hath not stooped ;
 Take no thought of her servitors that have drooped,
 For we are nothing ; and if one talk of death —
 Why, the ribs of the earth subsist frail as a breath
 If but God wearieh.

THE EQUILIBRISTS

Full of her long white arms and milky skin
 He had a thousand times remembered sin.
 Alone in the press of people travelled he,
 Minding her jacinth and myrrh and ivory.

Mouth he remembered : the quaint orifice
 From which came heat that flamed upon the kiss,
 Till cold words came down spiral from the head,
 Grey doves from the officious tower illsped.

Body — it was a white field ready for love.
On her body's field, with the gaunt tower above,
The lilies grew, beseeching him to take,
If he would pluck and wear them, bruise and break.

Eyes talking : Never mind the cruel words,
Embrace my flowers but not embrace the swords.
But what they said, the doves came straightway flying
And unsaid : Honor, Honor, they came crying.

Importunate her doves. Too pure, too wise,
Clambering on his shoulder, saying, Arise,
Leave me now, and never let us meet,
Eternal distance now command thy feet.

Predicament indeed, which thus discovers
Honor among thieves, Honor between lovers.
O such a little word is Honor, they feel !
But the grey word is between them cold as steel.

At length I saw these lovers fully were come
Into their torture of equilibrium :
Dreadfully had forsworn each other, and yet
They were bound each to each, and they did not forget.

And rigid as two painful stars, and twirled
About the clustered night their prison world,
They burned with fierce love always to come near,
But Honor beat them back and kept them clear.

Ah, the strict lovers, they are ruined now !
I cried in anger. But with puddled brow
Devising for those gibbeted and brave
Came I descanting : Man, what would you have ?

For spin your period out, and draw your breath,
A kinder sæculum begins with Death.
Would you ascend to Heaven and bodiless dwell ?
Or take your bodies honorless to Hell ?

In Heaven you have heard no marriage is,
No white flesh tinder to your lecheries,
Your male and female tissue sweetly shaped
Sublimed away, and furious blood escaped.

Great lovers lie in Hell, the stubborn ones
Infatuate of the flesh upon the bones ;
Stuprate, they rend each other when they kiss ;
The pieces kiss again — no end to this.

But still I watched them spinning, orbited nice.
 Their flames were not more radiant than their ice.
 I dug in the quiet earth and wrought the tomb
 And made these lines to memorize their doom:—

*Equilibrists lie here; stranger, tread light;
 Close, but untouched in each other's sight;
 Mouldered the lips and ashy the tall skull,
 Let them lie perilous and beautiful.*

Conrad Aiken

[1889-]

DISCORDANTS

I

Music I heard with you was more than music,
 And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
 Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
 All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
 And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.—
 These things do not remember you, belovèd,—
 And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
 And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;
 And in my heart they will remember always,—
 They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.

II

My heart has become as hard as a city street,
 The horses trample upon it, it sings like iron,
 All day long and all night long they beat,
 They ring like the hooves of time.

My heart has become as drab as a city park,
 The grass is worn with the feet of shameless lovers,
 A match is struck, there is kissing in the dark,
 The moon comes, pale with sleep.

My heart is torn with the sound of raucous voices,
 They shout from the slums, from the streets, from the crowded
 places,
 And tunes from a hurdy-gurdy that coldly rejoices
 Shoot arrows into my heart.

III

Dead Cleopatra lies in a crystal casket,
 Wrapped and spiced by the cunningest of hands.
 Around her neck they have put a golden necklace,
 Her tatbebs, it is said, are worn with sands.

Dead Cleopatra was once revered in Egypt,
 Warm-eyed she was, this princess of the South.
 Now she is very old and dry and faded,
 With black bitumen they have sealed up her mouth.

O sweet clean earth, from whom the green blade cometh !
 When we are dead, my best belovèd and I,
 Close well above us, that we may rest forever,
 Sending up grass and blossoms to the sky.

IV

In the noisy street,
 Where the sifted sunlight yellows the pallid faces,
 Sudden I close my eyes, and on my eyelids
 Feel from the far-off sea a cool faint spray, —

A breath on my cheek,
 From the tumbling breakers and foam, the hard sand shattered,
 Gulls in the high wind whistling, flashing waters,
 Smoke from the flashing waters blown on rocks ,

— And I know once more,
 O dearly belovèd ! — that all these seas are between us,
 Tumult and madness, desolate save for the sea-gulls,
 You on the farther shore, and I in this street.

TETÉLESTAI

I

How shall we praise the magnificence of the dead,
 The great man humbled, the haughty brought to dust ?
 Is there a horn we should not blow as proudly
 For the meanest of us all, who creeps his days,
 Guarding his heart from blows, to die obscurely ?
 I am no king, have laid no kingdoms waste,
 Taken no princes captive, led no triumphs
 Of weeping women through long walls of trumpets ;
 Say rather, I am no one, or an atom ;
 Say rather, two great gods, in a vault of starlight,
 Play ponderingly at chess, and at the game's end
 One of the pieces, shaken, falls to the floor

And runs to the darkest corner ; and that piece
 Forgotten there, left motionless, is I. . . .
 Say that I have no name, no gifts, no power,
 Am only one of millions, mostly silent ;
 One who came with eyes and hands and a heart,
 Looked on beauty, and loved it, and then left it.
 Say that the fates of time and space obscured me,
 Led me a thousand ways to pain, bemused me,
 Wrapped me in ugliness ; and like great spiders
 Dispatched me at their leisure. . . . Well, what then ?
 Should I not hear, as I lie down in dust,
 The horns of glory blowing above my burial ?

II

Morning and evening opened and closed above me :
 Houses were built above me , trees let fall
 Yellowing leaves upon me, hands of ghosts ,
 Rain has showered its arrows of silver upon me
 Seeking my heart ; winds have roared and tossed me ;
 Music in long blue waves of sound has borne me
 A helpless weed to shores of unthought silence ;
 Time, above me, within me, crashed its gongs
 Of terrible warning, sifting the dust of death ;
 And here I lie. Blow now your horns of glory
 Harshly over my flesh, you trees, you waters !
 You stars and suns, Canopus, Deneb, Rigel,
 Let me, as I lie down, here in this dust,
 Hear, far off, your whispered salutation !
 Roar now above my decaying flesh, you winds ,
 Whirl out your earth-scents over this body, tell me
 Of ferns and stagnant pools, wild roses, hillsides !
 Anoint me, rain, let crash your silver arrows
 On this hard flesh ! I am the one who named you,
 I lived in you, and now I die in you.
 I your son, your daughter, treader of music,
 Lie broken, conquered . . . Let me not fall in silence.

III

I, the restless one ; the circler of circles ;
 Herdsman and roper of stars, who could not capture
 The secret of self ; I who was tyrant to weaklings,
 Striker of children ; destroyer of women ; corrupter
 Of innocent dreamers, and laughter at beauty ; I,
 Too easily brought to tears and weakness by music,
 Baffled and broken by love, the helpless beholder
 Of the war in my heart of desire with desire, the struggle

Of hatred with love, terror with hunger ; I
 Who laughed without knowing the cause of my laughter, who grew
 Without wishing to grow, a servant to my own body ;
 Loved without reason the laughter and flesh of a woman,
 Enduring such torments to find her ! I who at last
 Grow weaker, struggle more feebly, relent in my purpose,
 Choose for my triumph an easier end, look backward
 At earlier conquests ; or, caught in the web, cry out
 In a sudden and empty despair, ‘Tetélestai !’
 Pity me, now ! I, who was arrogant, beg you !
 Tell me, as I lie down, that I was courageous.
 Blow horns of victory now, as I reel and am vanquished.
 Shatter the sky with trumpets above my grave.

IV

. . . Look ! this flesh how it crumbles to dust and is blown !
 These bones, how they grind in the granite of frost and are nothing !
 This skull, how it yawns for a flicker of time in the darkness,
 Yet laughs not and sees not ! It is crushed by a hammer of sunlight,
 And the hands are destroyed. . . . Press down through the leaves
 of the jasmine,
 Dig through the interlaced roots — nevermore will you find me ;
 I was no better than dust, yet you cannot replace me. . . .
 Take the soft dust in your hand — does it stir : does it sing ?
 Has it lips and a heart ? Does it open its eyes to the sun ?
 Does it run, does it dream, does it burn with a secret, or tremble
 In terror of death ? Or ache with tremendous decisions ? . . .
 Listen ! . . . It says : ‘I lean by the river. The willows
 Are yellowed with bud. White clouds roar up from the south
 And darken the ripples ; but they cannot darken my heart,
 Nor the face like a star in my heart ! . . . Rain falls on the water
 And pelts it, and rings it with silver. The willow trees glisten,
 The sparrows chirp under the eaves ; but the face in my heart
 Is a secret of music. . . . I wait in the rain and am silent.’
 Listen again ! . . . It says : ‘I have worked, I am tired,
 The pencil dulls in my hand : I see through the window
 Walls upon walls of windows with faces behind them,
 Smoke floating up to the sky, an ascension of sea-gulls.
 I am tired. I have struggled in vain, my decision was fruitless,
 Why then do I wait ? with darkness, so easy, at hand ! . . .
 But tomorrow, perhaps . . . I will wait and endure till tomor-
 row ! . . .
 Or again : ‘It is dark. The decision is made. I am vanquished
 By terror of life. The walls mount slowly about me
 In coldness. I had not the courage. I was forsaken.
 I cried out, was answered by silence . . . Tetélestai ! . . .’

Hear how it babbles! — Blow the dust out of your hand,
 With its voices and visions, tread on it, forget it, turn homeward
 With dreams in your brain. . . . This, then, is the humble, the
 nameless, —

The lover, the husband and father, the struggler with shadows,
 The one who went down under shoutings of chaos, the weakling,
 Who cried his ‘forsaken!’ like Christ on the darkening hilltop! . . .
 This, then, is the one who implores, as he dwindleth to silence,
 A fanfare of glory. . . . And which of us dares to deny him?

EVENING SONG OF SENLIN

It is evening, Senlin says, and in the evening,
 By a silent shore, by a far distant sea,
 White unicorns come gravely down to the water.
 In the lilac dusk they come, they are white and stately,
 Stars hang over the purple waveless sea ;
 A sea on which no sail was ever lifted,
 Where a human voice was never heard.
 The shadows of vague hills are dark on the water,
 The silent stars seem silently to sing.
 And gravely come white unicorns down to the water,
 One by one they come and drink their fill ;
 And daisies shine like stars on the darkened hill . . .

It is evening, Senlin says, and in the evening
 The leaves on the trees, abandoned by the light,
 Look to the earth, and whisper, and are still.
 The bat with horned wings, tumbling through the darkness,
 Breaks the web, and the spider falls to the ground.
 The starry dewdrop gathers upon the oakleaf,
 Clings to the edge, and falls without a sound.
 Do maidens spread their white palms to the starlight
 And walk three steps to the east and clearly sing?
 Do dewdrops fall like a shower of stars from willows?
 Has the small moon a ghostly ring? . . .
 White skeletons dance on the moonlit grass,
 Singing maidens are buried in deep graves,
 The stars hang over a sea like polished glass . . .
 And solemnly one by one in the darkness there
 Neighing far off on the haunted air
 White unicorns come gravely down to the water . . .

No silver bells are heard. The westering moon
 Lights the pale floors of caverns by the sea.

Wet weed hangs on the rock. In shimmering pools
 Left on the rocks by the receding sea
 Starfish slowly turn their white and brown
 Or writhe on the naked rocks and drown.
 Do sea-girls haunt these caves — do we hear faint singing?
 Do we hear from under the sea a thin bell ringing?
 Was that a white hand lifted among the bubbles
 And fallen softly back?
 No, these shores and caverns all are silent,
 Dead in the moonlight; only, far above,
 On the smooth contours of these headlands,
 White amid the eternal black,
 One by one in the moonlight there,
 Neighing far off on the haunted air,
 The unicorns come down to the sea.

MORNING SONG OF SENLIN

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
 When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
 I arise, I face the sunrise,
 And do the things my fathers learned to do.
 Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
 Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
 And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
 Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine leaves tap my window,
 Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
 The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
 Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
 And tie my tie once more.
 While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
 Crash on a white sand shore.
 I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
 How small and white my face! —
 The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
 And bathes in a flame of space.
 There are houses hanging above the stars
 And stars hung under a sea . . .
 And a sun far off in a shell of silence
 Dapples my walls for me . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
 Should I not pause in the light to remember god?

Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
 He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
 I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
 To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
 Accept these humble offerings, cloud of silence !
 I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine leaves tap my window,
 The snail-track shines on the stones,
 Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
 Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
 Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
 The walls are about me still as in the evening,
 I am the same, and the same name still I keep.

The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
 The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
 In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
 Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
 Tossing their long white manes,
 And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
 Their shoulders black with rains . . .
 It is morning. I stand by the mirror
 And surprise my soul once more ;
 The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
 There are suns beneath my floor . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
 And depart on the winds of space for I know not where,
 My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
 And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
 There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
 And a god among the stars ; and I will go
 Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
 And humming a tune I know . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
 Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
 The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
 Repeating three clear tones.

WHEN TROUT SWIM DOWN GREAT
ORMOND STREET

When trout swim down Great Ormond Street,
And sea-gulls cry above them lightly,
And hawthorns heave cold flagstones up
To blossom whitely,

Against old walls of houses there,
Gustily shaking out in moonlight
Their country sweetness on sweet air;
And in the sunlight,

By the green margin of that water,
Children dip white feet and shout,
Casting nets in the braided water
To catch the trout:

Then I shall hold my breath and die,
Swearing I never loved you; no,
'You were not lovely!' I shall cry,
'I never loved you so.'

THIS IS THE SHAPE OF THE LEAF

This is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower,
And this the pale bole of the tree
Which watches its bough in a pool of unwavering water
In a land we never shall see.

The thrush on the bough is silent, the dew falls softly,
In the evening is hardly a sound.
And the three beautiful pilgrims who come here together
Touch lightly the dust of the ground,

Touch it with feet that trouble the dust but as wings do,
Come shyly together, are still,
Like dancers who wait, in a pause of the music, for music
The exquisite silence to fill.

This is the thought of the first, and this of the second,
And this the grave thought of the third:
'Linger we thus for a moment, palely expectant,
And silence will end, and the bird

'Sing the pure phrase, sweet phrase, clear phrase in the twilight
To fill the blue bell of the world;
And we, who on music so leaflike have drifted together,
Leaflike apart shall be whirled

'Into what but the beauty of silence, silence forever?' . . .
 . . . This is the shape of the tree,
 And the flower, and the leaf, and the three pale beautiful pilgrims;
 This is what you are to me.

AND ALREADY THE MINUTES

And already the minutes, the hours, the days,
 Separate thoughts and separate ways,
 Fall whitely and silently and slowly between us,
 Fall between us like phantasmal rain and snow.
 And we, who were thrust for an instant so sharply together,
 Under changing skies to alien destinies go.

Melody heard in the midnight on the wind, —
 Orange poppy of fire seen in a dream, —
 Vainly I try to keep you. How the sky,
 A great blue wind, with a gigantic laugh,
 Scorns us apart like chaff.
 Like a bird blown to sea am I.

O let us hold, amid these immensities,
 The blinding blaze of the hostile infinite,
 To the one clear phrase we knew and still may know:
 Walls rise daily and darkly between us
 But love has seen us,
 Wherever we go love too must go.

Beautiful, twilight, mysterious, bird-haunted land
 Seen from the ship, with the far pale shore of sand,
 And the blue deep folds of hills inviting the stars to rest,
 Though I shall never set foot there, nor explore you,
 Nor hear your angelus of bells about me, I shall adore you
 And know you still the best.

WHY IS IT

Why is it, as I enter at last the panelled room,
 And pause, having opened the door,
 And turning my eyes from wall to wall in the gloom
 Find all as it was before, —

Something, a slow, grave, passionless wave of grief,
 So whelms me in silence there,
 That I listen, like one who loses his only belief,
 In vain to the voiceless air?

Did I expect, in my absence, that you had come —
 You, or a sign from you —

To lend a voice to a beauty that else was dumb?
But alas, there is nothing new,

The room is the same, the same, there has been no change,
The table, the chairs are the same,
Nothing has altered, nothing is singing and strange,
No hover of light or flame;

And the walls have not, as in an illusion of spring,
Blossomed, nor the oaken chair
Put forth pale leaves, nor is there a bird to sing
In the mystically widened air.

Yet if you had come, and stood for an instant dreaming,
And thought my name and gone,
Leaving behind you hardly a stir of seeming,
I should no less have known;

For this would have been no longer the hated room
Whose walls imprison me now,
But the infinite heavens, and one white bough in bloom,
And a bird to sing on the bough.

THERE IS NOTHING MOVING THERE

There is nothing moving there, in that desert of silence,
Nothing living there, not even a blade of grass.
The morning there is as silent as the evening,
The nights and days with an equal horror pass.

Nothing moving except the cold, slow shadow
Thrown on sand by a boulder, or by the cliff
Whose rock not even a lichen comes to cover,
To hide — from what? — time's ancient hieroglyph.

The sun, at noon, sings like a flaming cymbal
Above that waste: but the waste makes no reply.
In all that desolation of rock and gravel
There is no water, no answer to the sky.

Sometimes, perhaps, from other lands more happy,
A faint wind, slow, exhausted, ventures there,
And loses itself in silence, like a music.
And then — who knows? — beneath that alien air,

Which moves mysteriously as memory over
Forlorn abysses and peaks of stone and sand,
Ghosts of delight awake for a shining moment,
And all is troubled, and that desolate land

Remembers grass and flowers, and birds that sang there
 Their miracles of song in lovely trees,
 And waters that poured, or stood, in dreaming azure,
 Praising the sky. Perhaps once more it sees

The rose, the moon, the pool, in the blue evening,
 And knows that silence in which one bird will sing
 Slowly and sleepily his praise of gardens.
 Perhaps once more, for a moment, it remembers spring.

FAD E, T H E N

Fade, then, — die, depart, and come no more —
 You, whose beauty I abhor —
 Out of my brain
 Take back your voice that lodges there in pain,
 Tear out your thousand golden roots
 That thrust their tentacles in my heart
 But bear no fruits.

Now like an exquisite but sterile tree
 Your beauty grows in me
 And feeds on light
 Its lifted arms of leaves and blossoms white.
 Come birds, come bees,
 And marry flower with flower that it may bear
 Like other trees.

Or else let hatred like a lightning come,
 And flash, and strike it numb,
 And strew on rock
 These singing leaves, that, singing, seem to mock.
 Thus let my heart once more be naked stone,
 Bare under wind and hard with grief,
 And leave not in a single crevice
 A single leaf.

KING BORBORIGMI

You say you heard King Borborigmi laugh?
 Say how it was. Some heavenly body moved him?
 The moon laughed first? Dark earth put up a finger
 Of honeysuckle, through his moonlit window,
 And tickled him?

— King Borborigmi laughed
 Alone, walking alone in an empty room,
 Thinking, and yet not thinking, seeing, yet blind.

One hand was on his chin, feeling the beard
 That razors could not stay; the other groped;
 For it was dark, and in the dark were chairs;
 Midnight, or almost midnight; Aldebaran
 Hanging among the dews.

— King Borborigmi

Laughed once or twice at nothing, just as midnight
 Released a flock of bells?

— Not this alone;

Not bells in flight toward Aldebaran;
 Nor the immittigable beard; nor dews
 Heavily pattering on the pent-house roof;
 Nor chairs in shadow which his foot disturbed.
 Yet it was all of these, and more: the air
 Twirling the curtain where a red moth hung:
 The one bell flying later than the others
 Into the starstrung silence: the garden breaking
 To let a thousand seedlings have their way:
 An eye-tooth aching, and the pendulum
 That heavily ticked upon the leftward swing.

— These trifles woke the laughter of a king?

— Much less than these, and more! He softly stepped
 Among the webby world, and felt it shudder.
 Under the earth — a strand or two of web —
 He saw his father's bones, fallen apart,
 The jawbone sunken and the skull caved in.
 Among his mother's bones a cactus rooted,
 And two moles crept, and ants held carnival.
 Above the obscene tomb an aloe blossomed;
 Dew glistened on the marble. This he saw,
 And at the selfsame moment heard the cook
 Wind the alarm-clock in her bedroom, yawn,
 And creak the bed. And it was then, surprised,
 He touched a chair, and laughed, and twitched the curtain, —
 And the moth flew out.

— Alas, poor Borborigmi,

That it should be so little, and so sorry
 A thing to make him laugh!

— Young Borborigmi,

Saw more than this. The infinite octopus
 With eyes of chaos and long arms of stars,
 And belly of void and darkness, became clear
 About him, and he saw himself embraced

And swept along a vein, with chairs and teeth,
 Houses and bones and gardens, cooks and clocks ;
 The midnight bell, a snoring cook, and he,
 Mingled and flowed like atoms.

— It was this
 That made him laugh — to see himself as one
 Corpuscle in the infinite octopus? . . .
 And was this all, old fool, old turner of leaves? . . .

— Alone, thinking alone in an empty room
 Where moonlight and the mouse were met together,
 And pulse and clock together ticked, and dew
 Made contrapuntal patter, Borborigmi
 Fathomed in his own viscera the world,
 Went downward, sounding like a diver, holding
 His peaked nose ; and when he came up, laughed.
 These things and others saw. But last of all,
 Ultimate or penultimate, he saw
 The one thing that undid him !

— What was this?
 The one grotesquer thing among grotesques ?
 Carrion, offal, or the toothbrush ready
 For carnal fangs ? Cancer, that grasps the heart,
 Or fungus, whitely swelling in the brain ?
 Some gargoyle of the thought ?

— King Borborigmi,
 Twitching the curtain as the last bell flew
 Melodious to Aldebaran, beheld
 The moth fly also. Downward dropped it softly
 Among dropped petals, white. And there one rose
 Was open in the moonlight ! Dew was on it ;
 The bat, with ragged wing, cavorting, sidling,
 Snapped there a sleeping bee —

— And crunched the moth? . . .

— It was the rose in moonlight, crimson, yet
 Blanchéd by the moon ; the bee asleep ; the bat
 And fallen moth — but most the guileless rose.
 Guileless! . . . King Borborigmi struck his foot
 Against a chair, and saw the guileless rose
 Joining himself (King Bubblegut), and all
 Those others — the immitigable beard ;
 Razors and teeth ; his mother's bones ; the tomb :
 The yawning cook ; the clock ; the dew ; the bells
 Bursting upward like bubbles — ; all so swept

Along one vein of the infinite octopus
 With eyes of chaos and long arms of stars
 And belly of void and darkness. It was then
 He laughed; as he would never laugh again.
 For he saw everything; and, in the centre
 Of corrupt change, one guileless rose; and laughed
 For puzzlement and sorrow.

Ah, poor man,
 Poor Borborigmi, young, to be so wise!

— Wise? No. For what he laughed at was just this:
 That to see all, to know all, is to rot.
 So went to bed; and slept; is sleeping still,
 If none has waked him.

— Dead? King Borborigmi
 Is dead? Died laughing? Sleeps a dreamless sleep
 Till cook's alarm clock wakes him?

— Sleeps like Hamlet,
 King of infinite space in a walnut shell —
 But has bad dreams; I fear he has bad dreams.

AND IN THE HANGING GARDENS

And in the hanging gardens there is rain
 From midnight until one, striking the leaves
 And bells of flowers, and stroking boles of planes,
 And drawing slow arpeggios over pools,
 And stretching strings of sound from eaves to ferns.
 The princess reads. The knave of diamonds sleeps.
 The king is drunk, and flings a golden goblet
 Down from the turret window (curtained with rain)
 Into the lilacs.

And at one o'clock
 The vulcan under the garden wakes and beats
 The gong upon his anvil. Then the rain
 Ceases, but gently ceases, dripping still,
 And sound of falling water fills the dark
 As leaves grow bold and upright, and as eaves
 Part with water. The princess turns the page
 Beside the candle, and between two braids
 Of golden hair. And reads: "From there I went
 Northward a journey of four days, and came
 To a wild village in the hills, where none
 Was living save the vulture and the rat,
 And one old man, who laughed, but could not speak."

The roofs were fallen in ; the well grown over
With weed ; and it was there my father died.
Then eight days further, bearing slightly west,
The cold wind blowing sand against our faces,
The food tasting of sand. And as we stood
By the dry rock that marks the highest point
My brother said : ‘Not too late is it yet
To turn, remembering home.’ And we were silent
Thinking of home.” The princess shuts her eyes
And feels the tears forming beneath her eyelids
And opens them, and tears fall on the page.
The knave of diamonds in the darkened room
Throws off his covers, sleeps, and snores again.
The king goes slowly down the turret stairs
To find the goblet.

And at two o’clock

The vulcan in his smithy underground
Under the hanging gardens, where the drip
Of rain among the clematis and ivy
Still falls from sipping flower to purple flower,
Smites twice his anvil, and the murmur comes
Among the roots and vines. The princess reads :
“As I am sick, and cannot write you more,
Nor have not long to live, I give this letter
To him, my brother, who will bear it south
And tell you how I died. Ask how it was,
There in the northern desert, where the grass
Was withered, and the horses, all but one,
Perished” . . . The princess drops her golden head
Upon the page between her two white arms
And golden braids. The knave of diamonds wakes
And at his window in the darkened room
Watches the lilacs tossing, where the king
Seeks for the goblet.

And at three o’clock

The moon inflames the lilac heads, and thrice
The vulcan, in his root-bound smithy, clangs
His anvil ; and the sounds creep softly up
Among the vines and walls. The moon is round,
Round as a shield above the turret top.
The princess blows her candle out, and weeps
In the pale room, where scent of lilac comes,
Weeping, with hands across her eyelids, thinking
Of withered grass, withered by sandy wind.
The knave of diamonds, in his darkened room,

Holds in his hands a key, and softly steps
 Along the corridor, and slides the key
 Into the door that guards her. Meanwhile, slowly,
 The king, with raindrops on his beard and hands,
 And dripping sleeves, climbs up the turret stairs,
 Holding the goblet upright in one hand;
 And pauses on the midmost step, to taste
 One drop of wine, wherewith wild rain has mixed.

THE ROOM

Through that window — all else being extinct
 Except itself and me — I saw the struggle
 Of darkness against darkness. Within the room
 It turned and turned, dived downward. Then I saw
 How order might — if chaos wished — become:
 And saw the darkness crush upon itself,
 Contracting powerfully; it was as if
 It killed itself: slowly: and with much pain.
 Pain. The scene was pain, and nothing but pain.
 What else, when chaos draws all forces inward
 To shape a single leaf? . . .

For the leaf came,
 Alone and shining in the empty room;
 After a while the twig shot downward from it;
 And from the twig a bough; and then the trunk,
 Massive and coarse; and last the one black root.
 The black root cracked the walls. Boughs burst the window:
 The great tree took possession.

Tree of trees!
 Remember (when time comes) how chaos died
 To shape the shining leaf. Then turn, have courage,
 Wrap arms and roots together, be convulsed
 With grief, and bring back chaos out of shape.
 I will be watching then as I watch now.
 I will praise darkness now, but then the leaf.

SOUND OF BREAKING

Why do you cry out, why do I like to hear you
 Cry out, here in the dewless evening, sitting
 Close, close together, so close that the heart stops beating
 And the brain its thought? Wordless, worthless mortals
 Stumbling, exhausted, in this wilderness
 Of our conjoint destruction! Hear the grass
 Raging about us! Hear the worms applaud!

Hear how the ripples make a sound of chaos !
 Hear now, in these and the other sounds of evening,
 The first brute step of God !

About your elbow,
 Making a ring of thumb and finger, I
 Slide the walled blood against the less-walled blood,
 Move down your arm, surmount the wrist-bone, shut
 Your long slim hand in mine. Each finger-tip
 Is then saluted by a finger-tip ;
 The hands meet back to back, then face to face ;
 Then lock together. And we, with eyes averted,
 Smile at the evening sky of alabaster,
 See nothing, lose our souls in the maelstrom, turning
 Downward in rapid circles.

Bitter woman,
 Bitter of heart and brain and blood, bitter as I
 Who drink your bitterness — can this be beauty ?
 Do you cry out because the beauty is cruel ?
 Terror, because we downward sweep so swiftly ?
 Terror of darkness ?

It is a sound of breaking,
 The world is breaking, the world is a sound of breaking,
 Many-harmonied, diverse, profound,
 A shattering beauty. See, how together we break,
 Hear what a crashing of disordered chords and discords
 Fills the world with falling, when we thus lean
 Our two mad bodies together !

It is a sound
 Of everlasting grief, the sound of weeping,
 The sound of disaster and misery, the sound
 Of passionate heartbreak at the centre of the world.

James Rorty

[1890-

] [

NOW THAT THESE TWO

Now that these two have parted, let a word
 Be said for the yellow
 Bird that flew, and the billow
 That broke on the sand, and the tree in which they heard
 The patient wind consent
 To all they said, and meant.

These will endure, even after his fashion the bird.
 How exquisite is man and how unique,
 How strangely strident, how oblique
 From nature's habit, who can look unstirred
 Upon the earth with veiled eye,
 And walk, and talk, and inly die!

Now that these two have parted, it may be said
 Perhaps, that they were right ;
 Something took flight ;
 And now one sees no raven bringing bread.
 The sea has storms, whose shock
 Loosens the lichen from the rock.

A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT

Before there were houses, there were the wild hills and the blind
 wind blowing the moon-washed trees.

Before there were candle-lights and lamp-lights there were the
 planet worlds and the star worlds blowing, blowing in the ether
 foam.

Before there was this hearth, there were the crouched savages and
 the gaunt beasts waiting at the fire-light's rim.

Before there was you, my dear, there was Spring lust, and the chase
 of nymph and satyr over the hill.

The start of the wind is where, my dear ? And the blind wind's end
 is where ?

And here where we lodge is where, my dear ? And here where we
 lodge is where ?

ENTRY TO THE DESERT

If I should hasten or cry out
 I would not see the aspens whipping on the rim
 Of the red butte to the north ;
 I would not hear
 The rainy march of the wind that breathes
 A deeper shadow on the corn.

So . . . let me no less delicately plant
 My footsteps on this desert earth
 Than the prim quail that leads her grave procession through the
 sage,
 Or the gray rabbit, pausing lop-eared and alert
 Scenting the rain.

GRAY SHORE

I spoke the sea, that reaches green
 And avid fingers in between
 The capes, the gray capes of the world :

Will there be suns?
 I asked ; and will the gray tides flee
 When morning banners shake above the sea ?
 Hush ! said the sea ;
 So many hopes there are that fly
 And clamor in the painted sky !
 Hush ! said the sea, and hush.

Will there be winds ?
 I asked — a shrill wind sent for me
 To blow me high and set me free ?
 Hush ! said the sea ;
 The winds do naught but prowl
 Upon my deeps, and howl, and howl.
 Hush ! said the sea, and hush.

Will I have peace ?
 I asked — when sleep at last will come
 With shadowy breasts to bear me home ?
 Hush ! said the sea ;
 There come so many moaning things
 With weeping eyes and trailing wings —
 Hush ! said the sea, and hush.

THE ISLANDS : PUGET SOUND

I am content, for I am told
 Islands there are in this wide sound
 Unsought, unvisited by man ;
 Fronting the sea with dark, impenetrable pine,
 Silent, alone, sufficient each
 Unto itself.
 Yet there is speech enough ; the rain
 Beats in upon the rocks ; the wind
 Whispers the night through in the pines ; the day
 Breaks with a cry of gulls above the sea.
 Speech, but no human speech ; dark earth that was
 And will be, though no man
 Shall come to name it. O most pure !
 I would forbid
 You touch them, even with your thought.

SUNDAY MORNING

This is the Seventh Day;
 Over the valley
 We 'll shake a chime.
 That the sheep may browse and be blest,
 Dust of dead priests' words we scatter ;
 Every cow
 Dong . . . dong
 Shall walk more soberly.
 This is the Seventh Day;
 Blandly the secular winds
 Blow over the valley.

This is the Seventh Day;
 Faith shall hitch
 A hundred buggies.
 Paul to the Corinthians wrote . . . how the sun shines,
 The waters flow . . . praise Him, from whom
 Dong . . . dong
 And every spear of timothy shall stand.
 This is the Seventh Day;
 We 'll shake a chime
 Over the valley.

THE ACOLYTE

The locust, because the meadow is warm in the present
 Stare of the sun, has devised this evident
 Ritual, whereby a pious rubbing of thighs
 Proclaims that the sun doth rise
 Higher toward noon ; and though the incessant whine
 Of his metaphysical saw cuts nothing but the blue
 Air, nothing less strong than this divine
 Unreason will suffice for you,
 Poet ; look how the mowers in the field
 Lean on their forks and listen to the long
 Drone of this ignorant cantor — would they yield
 An equal unforced tribute to your song ?
 Nothing less strong, poet ; and in your lack
 Of accomplished thighs, one might suggest
 A silence or two of silence ; then come back
 And listen first at evening, it were best,
 And when the whip-poor-will begins to cry,
 Say nothing ; be a most astute
 Listener ; later you may want to try
 A pale derivative hoot.

CALIFORNIA DISSONANCE

There is a peewee bird that cries
 "La, sol, me"
 "La, sol, me" —
 He is the only thing that sighs
 Beside the western sea.

The blue jays chatter, "Tcha! Tcha! Tcha!"
 And cheer for California
 The real estate men chortle "Whee!"
 And tout the loud calliope.
 The sky is blue, the land is glad —
 The peewee bird alone is sad
 And sings in minor key
 "La, sol, me,"
 "La, sol, me."
 He is the only thing that sighs
 Beside the western sea.

It was a shock, I own, to see
 Sedition sitting in a tree
 Remarking plainly, "La, sol, me,"
 "La, sol, me,"
 "La, sol, me."
 The peewee bird is very wrong
 To voice such sentiments in song
 Beside the western sea.

I said: "My bird, you ought to know
 "Enough to sing, 'Do, me sol do,'
 "In major triad, sir, for so
 "You 'll help to make the country grow."

 "You 'll make the country grow, my dear —
 "So lift your little bill and cheer:
 "Do me sol do
 "Do me sol do'
 "You can't be singing 'la sol me'
 "We simply must have harmony."

I think the bird could not have heard —
 He chanted still, I give my word
 "La, sol, me
 "La, sol, me,"
 And gloomed in obstinate dissent
 From healthy public sentiment.

And yet I cannot help but hope
 The peewee bird will cease to mope;
 For surely he will feel in time
 The influence of the sunny clime;
 Ah yes, the peewee bird will soon
 Be thinking lovely thoughts in tune;
 The warnings of right-thinking men
 Will bring him to himself again.

Converted, he will win to grace
 And lift to God a shining face;
 And he will be no longer sad
 But so obstreperously glad
 That he will sing from morn to night
 Unbroken paeans of delight.
 "Do me sol do
 "Do me sol do"
 Which helps to make the country grow.

RAINY NIGHT

Strange things happen at night
 In the rain.
 It was black
 When I walked home: there were
 No watchmen in the sky: the lamps
 Of the fireflies smouldered and went out.
 The streaming fingers of the rain
 Stroked, stroked, stroked the suffering grass;
 The bulbous shapes
 Of trees sprang up to threaten me: but I was caught
 As in a web of rain, and could not cry.
 I blundered on: the burly, hooded forms
 Of gray ghosts going home
 Shouldered me, and I was glad to hear my brook
 Chuckle beneath the bridge, and see
 My kitchen lantern shining out at last.

A SPRING GARLAND

Hepatica

In April the moon is a thin feather of bloom,
 Soft, frail, yet confident, meshed in the rock-cold glitter of the
 driven stars.
 This is a sign: tomorrow the frail hepatica buds will pierce
 The riven quartz-rock, pushing through to sow
 Incredible day-stars in our frozen woods.

Arbutus

Gone for no reason, the arbutus
Is here remembered, where the wood-road cuts
A mossy swathe across the cedar ridge.
None came; undimmed the silence, still the drip
Of the late snow feeds the virgin mold, and yet . . .
There have been rumors; this, they say,
Is high land with a view, so there will come
Roads, people, conquest. Something at least
Will be withheld, yet who would dream
The arbutus would know.

Anemone

This, the wind's color, the wind's transience
Quivering in stillness.

Lady's-slipper

Midst your grave elegance yesterday I saw
A tall deer treading; he was courtly and aware.

Marsh Marigold

The skunk cabbage is rank, sturdy and rank.
You too, you muck-fed hussy; bull-frog and I
We find you beautiful.

Blood-root

Too pure the blood-root, and too frank.
The petals soon fall; the stem
Bleeds.

Adder-tongue

In the pool, peepers, and on the bank
These poised serpent heads, yellow eyes, mottled leaves.
Go not near; they are there, not to be plucked.

Shad-bush

White breakers in the woods, foamed by the wind's flow,
Wind-nourished, clamoring for May.

Iris

We know so little of desire;
The green pool, the blue sky, this blue sheen toward mid-May.
All these are joined most curiously.

Trillium

Here dig: the trillium
Has little traffic with the sun, but knows
Where went that errant spring beneath the ground.

Visitors

Sparks from the city's grind-stone, strained, uncertain, sad,
You too would live. You have so little time? Then take
What you can
And leave what you must.

NOT SPRING

Not spring, nor any memory of youth
Burns as this autumn forest burns toward death.
The spark of birth, the candles that we light
Of hope and love to cheat our night —
How quickly they are quenched in this great flame whose breath
Kindles each hill with fierce intolerable truth!

Now we have seen, and now the streams of power
Run full, for we are fed with that same fire
The green youth dreaded. Uphill to defeat
Our lean spring faltered but to meet
A stricken summer; now our desire
Is free and raging to its ultimate hour.

Not spring; from us no agony of birth
Is asked or needed; in a crimson tide
Upon the down-slope of the world
We, the elect, are hurled
In fearful power and brief pride
Burning at last to silence and dark earth.

WINTER NOON

Between the upland orchard, the pink of the chilled peach limbs,
And the pine-dark, snow-white of the mountain,
Nothing moved, nothing spoke: when the wind's pulse, too, died
beneath the glare of the winter sun,
I knew that the animals were stronger. I, solitary, without excuse,
The human incommensurable, neither hunting nor hunted, how
could I live
In this still radiance? Then I heard
The thought of the hidden doe, the fox: "See, this

Is man, who has never learned
To lean on silence; always he would cheat
Meaning with speech, woo power with violence. See, how he
blinks,
Goes dizzy with being, seeks the half lights, the closed doors."

THE BELL-RINGERS

In the dark days, the early evenings of December,
With summer gone, and autumn, and the pale towers of the sky-
scrapers withered in the high cold, or blind in rain,
And the people stumbling home, sick with small fears, the little lies
of trade, the multiple loneliness of crowds,
Then the Christmas bell-ringers come forth, the mute whiskered
false-faces, each with his iron kettle and his bell.
Ting-ling-ling, ting-ling-ling — how hesitant, how humble these
priests! Is something really born, are they sure?
Long ago the desert villagers heard this bell; then the tired Greeks,
the Romans, even the reindeer people of the north — all fed
the myth, and the myth sustained them.
By this faith the pale towers rise, the myriad lights burn, the shoaled
motors race and stop, overhead a great ship drills a lighted
wake through the new ocean of the night air.
One small scrap of ancient holiness: out of this we have built a
world unholy, terrible, and fierce; but we are neither fierce
nor terrible.
The blood of the Lamb grows thin; next year or next century will
the bell-ringers come again to the street corners?
Not for long will we dream this dream; when fierceness wakes again
in our blood we shall want not bells, but trumpets, and again
the high cross.

Edna St. Vincent Millay [1892-]

I SHALL GO BACK

I shall go back again to the bleak shore
And build a little shanty on the sand
In such a way that the extremest band
Of brittle seaweed will escape my door
But by a yard or two, and nevermore
Shall I return to take you by the hand;
I shall be gone to what I understand
And happier than I ever was before.

The love that stood a moment in your eyes,
The words that lay a moment on your tongue,
Are one with all that in a moment dies,
A little under-said and over-sung;
But I shall find the sullen rocks and skies
Unchanged from what they were when I was young.

EUCLID ALONE HAS LOOKED ON BEAUTY BARE

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.

O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

GROW NOT TOO HIGH, GROW NOT TOO FAR FROM HOME

Grow not too high, grow not too far from home,
Green tree, whose roots are in the granite's face!
Taller than silver spire or golden dome
A tree may grow above its earthy place,
And taller than a cloud, but not so tall
The root may not be mother to the stem,
Lifting rich plenty, though the rivers fall,
To the cold sunny leaves to nourish them.
Have done with blossoms for a time, be bare;
Split rock; plunge downward; take heroic soil;
Deeper than bones — no pasture for you there;
Deeper than water, deeper than gold and oil:
Earth's fiery core alone can feed the bough
That blooms between Orion and the Plough.

I DREAMED I MOVED AMONG THE
ELYSIAN FIELDS

I dreamed I moved among the Elysian fields,
In converse with sweet women long since dead ;
And out of blossoms which that meadow yields
I wove a garland for your living head.
Danae, that was the vessel for a day
Of golden Jove, I saw, and at her side,
Whom Jove the Bull desired and bore away,
Europa stood, and the Swan's featherless bride.
All these were mortal women, yet all these
Above the ground had had a god for guest ;
Freely I walked beside them and at ease,
Addressing them, by them again addressed,
And marvelled nothing, for remembering you,
Wherefore I was among them well I knew.

LOVE IS NOT ALL; IT IS NOT MEAT
NOR DRINK

Love is not all ; it is not meat nor drink
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain,
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink
And rise and sink and rise and sink again ;
Love can not fill the thickened lung with breath,
Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone ;
Yet many a man is making friends with death
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.
It well may be that in a difficult hour,
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,
Or nagged by want past resolution's power,
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,
Or trade the memory of this night for food.
It well may be. I do not think I would.

OH, SLEEP FOREVER IN THE
LATMIAN CAVE

Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave,
Mortal Endymion, darling of the Moon !
Her silver garments by the senseless wave
Shouldered and dropped and on the shingle strewn,
Her fluttering hand against her forehead pressed,
Her scattered looks that trouble all the sky,

Her rapid footsteps running down the west —
 Of all her altered state, oblivious lie !
 Whom earthen you, by deathless lips adored,
 Wild-eyed and stammering to the grasses thrust,
 And deep into her crystal body poured
 The hot and sorrowful sweetness of the dust :
 Whereof she wanders mad, being all unfit
 For mortal love, that might not die of it.

Maxwell Bodenheim [1892-]

SHORT STORY IN SONNET FORM

Loud chatter in a thousand minor lines
 Was your religion, and your art was pain
 Disguised by phrases of verbose disdain.
 You married an old man who gave you wines
 Lukewarm and pink, until your tipsy youth,
 Grown weary of evading sensual lies,
 Ran to idiot-Pierrot whose cries
 Created that delusion known as truth.
 The ache of your sincerity betrayed
 His awkward falseness, and he turned away,
 Grinning until your bullet found his head.
 Then people claimed that you had merely paid
 Insanely for a tritely sordid play.
 Your lyric could not answer — it was dead.

LANDSCAPE

The countless vagaries of maple leaves,
 Elastic humbleness of flowers and weeds,
 The hill, a placid stoic to all creeds,
 They use an obvious language that deceives
 The subtle theories of human ears.
 Their tongue is motion and they scorn the rhyme
 And meter made by men to soothe their fears.

Beneath the warm strength of each August hour
 They spurn cohesion and the plans of thought,
 With quick simplicity that seems confused
 Because it signals mystic whims that tower
 Above the thoughts and loves that men have caught :
 Beyond the futile words that men have used.

COUNTRY GIRL

Your face is stencilled with a pensiveness.
 Your face contains a minor lyric trapped
 By dainty ignorance, and tamely capped
 By hair as trimly lifeless as your dress.
 You suffer from the drooling praise of old
 And youthful men, who strive to win a blind
 And soothing admiration from your mind,
 And do not try to make your thoughts unfold.

This comedy would fade into a host
 If it were not rewarded by the dead
 But unrelenting poet on your face.
 Your eyes are heavy with his reckless ghost :
 The trouble of his hands is on your head
 As you peer out into a clouded space.

REALISM

Regard an American farm.
 That jaded collaborator,
 Daylight, has just arrived.
 Wavy signal of smoke
 From the wooden farm-house disappears
 Beneath the bluely ascetic lack of interest.
 Horses, pigs, and cows
 Assemble their discontent.
 The result is a Chinese orchestra
 Devoid of discipline and cohesion,
 With all of the players intoxicated.
 The animals do not realize
 That their voices should portray
 The farmer in the angular house ;
 The hackneyed prose of his life ;
 The expanding soul of his corn-fields.
 Turn from the absence of human wisdom
 And see the lights in the farm-house.
 Dimly circumscribed and steady,
 They symbolize future events.
 The farm-hand walks to the barn,
 With an ox-like dragging of feet.
 Black shirt, and overalls
 Whose color has been removed by dirt,
 Obscure the heavy knots of his body.
 His cork-screw nose ascends
 To the eyes of an unperturbed pig.

Love and hate to him
 Are mouthfuls of coarse food hastily gulped
 During lulls in his muscular slavery.
 Beneath the slanting pungency
 Of the barn he vanishes,
 And with meaningless sounds
 He pays his meager tribute to life.
 Then the farmer persuades his age
 To indulge in an unwilling stumble
 Across the yard.
 His grey beard is the end of a rope
 That has gradually throttled his face.
 Within him, avarice
 Is awkwardly practising the rhythms
 Of weak emotions benignly, belatedly
 Preparing for celestial rewards.
 Within the cluttered farm-yard
 He stands, a figure of niggardly order.

Earth, the men who scrape at your flanks
 Can never stop to examine
 The thin line of speech that goes adventuring
 Where your brown hills bite the sky.

METAPHYSICAL POEM

Your pocket-handkerchief is large enough
 To cover all you see of this round moon,
 And yet the intellects within this disc
 May skip in widely frosty afternoon.

What men call size is but a shrunken fear
 Within their eyes that makes them fabricate
 Small explanations of huge mysteries
 And warm exaggerations of small fate.

Again men look upon what seems to be
 The shifting of events and call them time,
 Without perceiving that the moving noise
 Is only stillness breaking into rhyme.

For Christian, pagan, scientist, and fool,
 Console themselves with measurements and walls,
 Without allowing fantasy and thought
 To roam unfrightened past the vast, black halls

Where life receives an ordeal or a boon
 After the hurried arrogance of death.
 With blind and witless confidence men cling
 To well-known forms and give them pleasing breath.

COUNTRY-BROOK

Effortlessly graceful
 And with so many impulsive
 Secrets thrust into bubbles
 That human thought must ever
 Seem incomplete in comparison,
 The water flows over these stones.
 Impersonal, mellow, greenish wetness
 Of rocks and pebbles, much harder than human sternness
 And yet with feathers within them
 Given through long years by the water —
 A girl could split her heart upon them ;
 A man could blend them into his curse ;
 A woman could gaze at them, staring herself into peace,
 But the rocks and the water, lucidly,
 Urgently, purely sufficient unto themselves,
 Would still suggest the lesson
 Almost forever evaded
 By human hearts and minds.

POEM

O men, walk on the hills,
 With eyes whose sweeping straightness
 Emulates the stride of Time.
 O men, be like the redbird
 Making proud, clear circles in the air
 Beyond the faltering confessions
 Of explanation and defence.
 O men, be like a rosebush,
 Strongly unpresuming,
 Fragile only to the blindness
 In the fears held by brutality.
 O men, be sometimes able
 To leave the solaces of praise and blame,
 Like the moonlight, which seeks
 Only to discover.
 O men, when rhythm marries thought
 Life escapes defiantly
 From the old, sleek tyrannies of earth

MEDITATIONS ON A LANDSCAPE

The clear horizon on this April day
 Is like a line of poetry crushed wide
 And thin beneath immensities of earth
 And sky — a line that lures and yet rebukes
 The men who crawl upon the earth and veil
 Their ordinary guzzling underneath
 Heroic confidence and swollen words.
 The half enslaved and half free earth and sky —
 Great, sweeping-bellied mothers — do not know
 That one illusion, where they seem to touch,
 Contains the endless death of human steps.
 Again the pine-trees finely stab the sky,
 With all their patient, gaunt sobriety
 Intent on proving that the ancient threat
 Of distance is a playful, quick mistake
 Made by the eyes of men who are not still.

Archibald MacLeish [1892—]

AGAINST ILLUMINATIONS

Avoid, you strollers in the dark street,
 You side by side touching at knee and shoulder,
 You going your own way your own ways together
 And who knows where, avoid these shafts of light,
 These oblongs out of doorways, the thin jet
 Under the window shade, beneath the shutter,
 The match flame squinting at the dark, the glimmer
 Between bent fingers where the old men sit —

These flashes making all things clear, inviting
 To easy candor, the kind eye in eye
 Of perfect honesty, the bright look meeting
 The bright look: these illuminations show
 Monsters. The truth examined by a flare
 Grows true, grows palpable, grows everywhere.

ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
 As a globed fruit

Dumb
 As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement where the moss has grown —

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

• • • •
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind —

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

• • • •
A poem should be equal to :
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea —

A poem should not mean
But be.

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

And here face down beneath the sun,
And here upon earth's noonward height,
To feel the always coming on,
The always rising of the night.

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow,

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening, strange,
The flooding dark about their knees,
The mountains over Persia change,

And now at Kermanshah the gate,
Dark, empty, and the withered grass,

And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass.

And Bagdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone,
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on,

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone,
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown,

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls,
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls,

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa, the gilded sand,
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land,

Nor now the long light on the sea —
And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift, how secretly,
The shadow of the night comes on. . . .

Phelps Putnam [1894—]]

BALLAD OF A STRANGE THING

His name was Chance, Jack Chance, he said,
And that his family was dead.
He was a lucid fool, his eyes
Were cool and he beyond surprise.
Into the township Pollard Mill
He came in autumn alone one day,
Loafing along those roads which still,
Though dying in the grass, report
That lumber-sledges went that way.
He came idly and in our town
He raised a flight of birds, a brown
And silver flock, and underneath
Their wings were tinged with gold; his breath

Blew and the birds dipped and rose
As if they surely lived which were
But lies of the calm sorcerer.

Autumn came bringing free
Melancholy, but to me
Brought Jack, when I was sitting there
In the open barn door-way where
The sun moved in and I could get,
Drifting by, the sound and smell
Of late bees and of mignonette
From the dying garden by the wall,
And hear the thin defeated bell
Of distant time, and see the tall
Elms beyond the orchard slopes
Rising improbably, like hopes
Swaying above the mind, and I
Was sitting there and he came by.
Under his hat I saw his eyes
Measuring without disguise
The ripeness of my house,
And measuring myself, and he
Turned in, approached and spoke to me.
He had decided undismayed
This was the place for Chance, and I
The boy for him ; and so he stayed.

And then the days moved gravely by,
Time drowned in fluent clarity
Flowing between him and me,
Who only lay along the walls
Unashamed of indolence, and heard
The dusty harvesters' harsh calls
To sweating teams, loading the sheaves
On the steep withered fields — their care
Was none of ours ; or reasoned there
Where the mill-pond burned with leaves
And rustled at the dam, on those
Stark thoughts that rose
Out of cool spoken words, or we
Loafing in the arbor ate
Slowly the warm grapes, the rusty
Creaking swallows skimmed
The long ridgepoles, the day grew late
Easily, and dimmed.

At night we made a fire to mark
A spot of mirth against the dark,
There in a pasture which lay high
On the nearness of the sky.
Other countrymen would come,
Young farmers, farmers' men, and sons,
One after one they learned to come
And laugh with Chance and tap the old
Keg of cider, acrid gold,
Which we had borne carefully
Out of the cellar where it lay,
Drowsing wickedly it lay
Waiting for us to set free
Its vigor and its treachery.

Then Jack would sing his bawdy songs :
The old ballad which belongs
To timelessness, *The Bastard King*,
Or Doctor Tanner, or *Mademoiselle*,
Or Lil who died of lechering.
She died with her boots on, as they tell,
With a champion lad between her knees.
Or he would sometime please,
If drinking brought delusion near,
To tell corrosive tales, the mere
Garments of lies, the cunning kind
Which echo somewhat in the mind,
And then they go, and you are more
Dull and baffled than before.

There went by then, in such a way,
Serene October ; the last day
Came and the night was newly cold.
But the fire was high and the old
Cider burned within and we,
A dozen foolish farmers, kept
Alive the late hilarity
Of autumn, and the township slept.
Then Chance arose from where he sat
Against the keg and cocked his hat
Sideways and, walking slow around
The fire, said — “I have always found
Nothing new among much change ;
But this I tell you now is strange :

It was at noon, the hour of sleep
For those who use their nights

In the deluding piracy
Of shadowy delights.

And so I slept, above the bank
Above the River Still,
Under an oak, the least of two
That rose under the hill.

But a sound crept through my nerves
And I woke and I could hear
Feet running fast and close,
Down the hill and near,

Then stop ; and heard a noise like sobs
And stood up quietly
And peering saw that a breathless girl
Was clutching the other tree.

And then a man came following,
Loping leisurely,
And when he stood beside her said,
'I knew you would wait for me.'

And then she turned at bay ; she was
Astonishingly rare,
A young ascetic fury she
Was something almost strange to me
With her honey fallen hair.

'Yes — and have waited even too long,
Before now, to be glad,
Watching your insolence too long —
Oh, you were the gorgeous lad
With your dark lovely face and all
The women you have had.

'I have seen the rabbits follow you
Unasked and eagerly ;
O ladies, you should see him now,
Begging a kiss of me.'

She ceased, and we all three were still
While he admired her,
And I kept hidden watching them,
For I have that character.

He did not mock her when he spoke,
'Where do they get these dull

Flash melodramas in their skulls?
And such a dainty skull.

'Listen, I keep no list of names
For vanity; and I
Dislike the names and odors and ways
Of women; I am shy
Of their domestic wills; and I
Am tired of the melting lie.

'But there you are — and sometimes love
Is more than remembered skill.'
'Love,' she said, 'is the rust which ate
The clean rancor of my will.'

He raised his quiet hand to touch
Her hair, but she
Turned sharply down the bank and he
Now followed instantly.

And there below the godly stream
Was whispering in its beard,
And she cried, 'Save me, River Still!'
Then stepped and disappeared.

Well — so far nothing strange;
But after that the queer
Began, and I have seen these things,
And I, the bastard son of change,
Would dare to call them queer.

I saw the girl had gone entirely,
And in her place a dry
Shivering graceful sheaf of reeds
Sprang up, suddenly high;

And that he, following so close
That her hair was in his face,
Clutched and had no girl but had
Sharp reeds in his embrace.

He stepped back, looking at his hands
All laced with blood; a spike
Broke short and stood between his ribs
Most murderous like.

This feller was not eager now,
But only dazed,

And pulled the wet spike from his side,
Fumbling and amazed.

He stooped slowly to bathe his hands
Then from his pocket drew
A folded knife and cut one reed,
Murmuring, ‘This will do.

Sometimes there’s music in these girls,
Sometimes,’ and sitting then
He made a whistle which he tried
And changed and tried again.

He blew five even notes and stopped,
But the sound rippled away
Slowly, as if a sweet clang came
From the leaves and hummed away.

And then there came along the bank
A black majestic goat
With yellow eyes and gilded horns
And a white beard at its throat.

The goat lay down before his feet
Respectfully, dipping its head,
And the man laughed and, ‘Can this be
A messenger?’ he said.

And played again and now more wild
And cloudily intricate,
And the goat arose and danced like one
Hieratic and sedate.

And that is all,” said Chance, and then
He said, “So long,” and walked away
Casually, as if the night were day.
And we jumped up calling, and then
Stood silent for over us coldly fell
Five piercing notes, each like a spark;
We stood there stiffly and immersed,
Hearing laughter in the dark,
Until I spoke, being the first,
“We had better go home now to bed;
We have drunk too much,” I said.

Thereafter the rains beat down
The autumn, the drenched leaves came down
From the black trees, choking the ditches,
And over the sea came sons-of-bitches

With a hollow quarrel, the talking rats
 Of England and of Europe slithered
 Down the hawsers, doffed their hats
 And squealed; and the plague spread and came,
 Taking the cleanly name
 Of honor for its strange device,
 Even to our town; the conscript lice
 Played soldiers over Pollard Mill
 And pitched their camp on the River Still;
 But no more Jack, and we were more
 Dull and baffled than before.

HASBROUCK AND THE ROSE

Hasbrouck was there and so were Bill
 And Smollet Smith the poet, and Ames was there.
 After his thirteenth drink, the burning Smith,
 Raising his fourteenth trembling in the air,
 Said, "Drink with me, Bill, drink up to the Rose."
 But Hasbrouck laughed like old men in a myth,
 Inquiring, "Smollet, are you drunk? What rose?"
 And Smollet said, "I drunk? It may be so;
 Which comes from brooding on the flower, the flower
 I mean toward which mad hour by hour
 I travel brokenly; and I shall know,
 With Hermes and the alchemists — but, hell,
 What use is it talking that way to you?
 Hard-boiled, unbroken egg, what can you care
 For the enfolded passion of the Rose?"
 Then Hasbrouck's voice rang like an icy bell:

"Arcane romantic flower, meaning what?
 Do you know what it meant? Do I?
 We do not know.
 Unfolding pungent rose, the glowing bath
 Of ecstasy and clear forgetfulness;
 Closing and secret bud one might achieve
 By long debauchery —
 Except that I have eaten it, and so
 There is no call for further lunacy.
 In Springfield, Massachusetts, I devoured
 The mystic, the improbable, the Rose.
 For two nights and a day, rose and rosette,
 And petal after petal and the heart,
 I had my banquet by the beams
 Of four electric stars which shone

Weakly into my room, for there,
 Drowning their light and gleaming at my side,
 Was the incarnate star
 Whose body bore the stigma of the Rose.
 And that is all I know about the flower;
 I have eaten it — it has disappeared.
 There is no Rose."

Young Smollet Smith let fall his glass; he said
 "Oh Jesus, Hasbrouck, am I drunk or dead?"

H Y M N T O C H A N C E

How shall we summon you?
 The tiny names of gods will not serve us now,
 Nor the magic names of the various sons of gods,
 Nor the names of their mothers murmured tenderly,
 Nor the masks of creatures which you have assumed.
 Gray hands enfolding all our lives,
 Gray hands, caress the stumbling of our tongues.

Lord Gardener, you have made our lives arise,
 Thin shoots of green articulated bone,
 Growing and bending and falling under your breath.
 You have grafted on these stems our nervy flesh
 Enriched with blood and our slow-blooming brains;
 You have made our fingers wise with restlessness.
 You have laid the earth out and the sea and the lower skies,
 You have set us on loose feet beside the earth
 That your many colored garden may run wild.
 And now from these garnished jaws your garden sings,
 Lord Chance,
 And your flowers coruscate with blossoming.

You are munificent, how shall we count your gifts?
 We enumerate like groping babyhood,
 For our thoughts are bound and packaged in your hands,
 The world is formed and furled in your ceaseless hands,
 The hours and days drip from your fingertips,
 The ages and our lives fall clustering
 And the seasons fall unjustly from your hands.

Lord Prince of Hell, you have given us thought, the worm
 Which coils insistently through our too sensate dust.
 It is this disease, Lord Death, which corrupts us all,
 For we lie to animate our meagreness,
 To make us to ourselves less mean
 And our companions less like mangled fools.

Lord Costumer, the cabinets of our blood
 Have been hung with robes to clothe our nakedness ;
 You have given us the burning skin of joy,
 You have turned our feet from circling slavery
 With the brilliance of a dollar thrown in the air.
 You have given the close bitter gown of grief,
 The acid lining of our joyousness.
 You have given us spirit, Lord, we are not abashed,
 And we have known quietude when our muscles moved
 Smoothly in laboring or in love
 And our nerves made harmony of their clamoring.
 We have raised ourselves immense memorials,
 And our laughter, like your own, has lapped the world.

You have given us the variable one, the infinite and the small,
 Which we have repaid with stiff ingratitude.
 We have insulted you as Lady Luck ;
 We have made our lives a foolishness
 Because your eyes were neither cool nor kind.
 We are the victims of unfounded lust,
 We have discovered laws, forgive us, Lord ;
 Forgive us, Lord, we are neither fine nor swift,
 We have not known our proper elegance.
 We have said tomorrow comes and the twinkling sun
 Will not refuse to flatter us with heat ;
 We have hid ourselves in minuscules of time.
 We have made ourselves low beds in an empty room ;
 But our beds drift in the dark and our lies dissolve
 And there is your face shimmering and your hands
 Weaving the chaos where we come and go.

Grand Anarch, there is disrepute for us,
 But our words are not disreputable nor mean ;
 We have spoken for ourselves and our dignity,
 Tearing our cheapness from us for a while.
 At this moment now, conceive us once again
 More suitable to the curving of your hands ;
 Make us tough and mystical,
 Give us such eyes as will penetrate your eyes
 And lungs to draw the breath you give to us.
 Hear us for we do not beg ;
 We only pray you heal our idiot ways
 And the kind of lonely madness which we have
 Of bleeding one another on the road.
 We travel in the belly of the wind ;
 It is you, Lord, who will make us lame or swift.

Mark Van Doren [1894-]

FORMER BARN LOT

Once there was a fence here,
 And the grass came and tried —
 Leaning from the pasture —
 To get inside.

But colt feet trampled it,
 Turning it brown;
 Until the farmer moved
 And the fence fell down;

Then any bird saw,
 Under the wire,
 Grass nibbling inward
 Like green fire.

NIGHT LILAC

Lilac alone —
 Standing so quiet, so dim, outside
 Till the door-light died
 On cricket and stone —

Do you sleep at last?
 Or — beyond this night that has taken my yard —
 Do you stare more hard,
 In a night more vast,

At the great white things
 That move the outermost world — the whale,
 The stallion, the pale
 High planet with rings,

The raven, the bull,
 And the midnight mountain that never is black?
 Lilac, come back!
 My lawn is too full

Of the dark; and the fine
 Impalpable shadows will never be still.
 Return as you will,
 Dim lilac, and shine!

MEMORIES

A child ran alone,
And nothing followed that he felt.
He never heard the sky moan
For old men. He never knelt
To call the hounds — that behind him ran alone
And searching smelt.

He did not hear their cries,
For there was curving earth between.
But he is taller now, and wise
Enough to listen as they lean
Upon the wind — that can turn and bring their cries
So clear and keen.

He still can look away
And do the business of his prime.
He has not foreseen the day
When he will sit and they will climb
And lick his face — that will never frown away
The tongues of time.

FIRST NIGHT ALONE

He locked the window
And lighted a candle,
Setting it where it would show him the edge
Of the door, and the handle.

Then to the barn
At an even pace —
Though once in the driveway cobwebs dangled
And blanched his face.

The garden again.
He looked to his light.
No other thing in the world was so firm
As that tapering white !

Now on the path,
Once more his eyes
Turned to the quiet warm curtains — boy,
That wasn't so wise !

Between the two fringes
A circle of hair ! —
Parted, as if a dead finger of chalk
Had descended there.

The top of a head !
 Who bends to the flame ? —
 Drinks it, and vanishes, leaving the walker
 All night to his shame :

Afraid to go forward,
 Afraid to go back ;
 Afraid of his window, that once was so empty. . . .
 And now so black. . . .

COMPANY GONE

Mountains, stand again,
 And flowery hay, put up your head.
 They are gone, the ten
 Men
 That flattened you with nothing said.

Lilac, come alive,
 And coreopsis, turn about.
 They are gone, the five
 Wives
 You always shun because they shout.

Rambler, tie your shoe,
 And Emily Gray, go on along.
 We are here, the two
 True
 Mouths that move but to your song.

ABOVE THE BATTLE

Higher than hate, and the abused
 Stiff bodies of men, and the stiff
 Walk, close to the ground, of men not just ;
 Higher, yes, than the uppermost whipped head,
 Than the stiff elbow of the whipper ;
 High in the unseen air a tree starts waving —
 Waving alone, and it says to itself :

I know.

Longer, yes, than the uppermost man remembers,
 Longer ago than the eyes laid deepest away,
 Longer ago than justice, there were trees.
 The face of the world was water, and the hair —
 Silk at the edge of salt — was waving trees ;
 But not like these.

In a slow wind
They rose and fell,
Laying them down
To sleep so well

That, standing to look,
They still would sway
In the bent wind,
In the curved day.

With a slant wind
They fell and rose,
Slowly, slowly,
And never a close

Of the circle of soft
Unended motion —
Silk at the salt
Stiff edge of ocean.

The low grass at our feet was a forest too;
The wind in it was a snake with indolent folds.
The wind in us was the word the white sky sang,
Sending no more than one slow syllable down. . . .
All of them long are dead, and none remembers.
Not even a root remembers; but I know,
I know what none of the men there huddle and cry.

The salt came,
And talking sand,
And north snow,
And man's hand,

And my slim fathers
Fled and stood
In a coarse fear,
In a loud wood.

We straightly rise,
We stiffly fall.
We do not listen
If men call

On ignorant winds
To set love right.
That was our day.
This is our night.

NOW THE SKY

How long have standing men — by such a stone
As this I watch from on this windless night —
Beheld Arcturus, golden and alone,
Guiding Antares and the Snake aright.

The Scales were up when not an Arab walked
On sand that soon was paved with names of stars;
Boötes herded, and the Giant stalked
Past the curved Dragon, contemplating wars.

How many an open eye, bedight with dew,
Over the sleeping flowers has drawn them down —
Andromeda, and Berenice's few
Dim tresses that shall ever flee the Crown.

From such a rock whence greybeards long ago,
Forgetting it beneath them, heard the Lyre,
I watch. But there is something now we know
Confusing all they saw with misty fire.

For them a hundred pictures on a slate.
For us no slate, and not a hand that draws.
For them a pasture-dome wherefrom the gate
Of Cancer led the Lion through its claws.

For them a frosty window, painted over,
Nightly, with flower faces in a ring —
Daisies dancing up, and clouds of clover
Scenting the after way, and phlox to fling

Thin petals left and right till morning lifted.
For us no shapely flame in all the dark;
For us a million embers that have drifted
Since the first fire, and not a sign to mark

Where anything shall end, or which shall go
With which until they both shall die to grey.
For watchers once a changeless face to know;
For us cold eyes that turn henceforth away.

They saw each constellation take its hour
Of triumph overhead, before it started
Down the broad West, whereon the death of power
Was written by the Ram, and nightly charted.

The Eagle and the Swan, that sailed so long,
Floating upon white wings the Arrow missed,

Tilted at midnight, plunging with a song
Earthward, and — as they sank — deep Hydra hissed.

Leo had long been growling in his lair
When Pegasus neighed softly in the East,
Rising upon a wind that blew his hair
Freshly, until Aquarius increased

The stream he aimed against the Fish's mouth,
And all the stars were wet with silent rain.
The Hyades came weeping, and the South
Sent mist to soothe the Sisters in their pain.

These things they witnessed, and Orion, climbing
Fiercely with those two Dogs announcing Fall ;
Then Winter, with Aldebaran loud-chiming,
Baiting the frozen Bull, that turned to call

The Bears to warm his anger. These they knew,
And knew the seasons with them, Spring and Spring —
Counting the dozen signs the finger drew
That swung the inconstant Sun around the Ring.

Slow Jupiter proceeded as they planned,
Lingered among the Twelve in stately turn ;
They touched the breasts of Venus, where the hand
Of Mars's fiery love had been to burn.

The sky was then a room, with people going
Faithfully to and fro, and beasts enchain'd.
The sky was then a midnight wastrel, throwing
Riches away ; and still the purse remained.

But now the sky is broken, door by door.
Strangers in the room obscure the hosts.
The meadow is not guarded any more
By watchers coming lonely to their posts.

The animals are never to be named
That swarm beyond our company of old —
Stragglers from the herd, that we had tamed
Unknowing the recesses of the fold.

Those were no heroes whom we once addressed —
Hercules, Orion, and the Twins.
Unwounded, they were running from the rest
Far there where only now the war begins.

There is a game for players still to play,
 Pretending that the board was never lost.
 But still the painted counters will decay,
 And knowledge sit along to count the cost.

THE BYSTANDERS

Who is this host of folk this fair spread day?
 And who these few that stand and do not run —
 Watching the others only, in the way
 Of the dark stars outside the circled sun?
 Strange, but the less are greater; only they
 Have number; here the many are the one.

Strange, but the host is single, like a beam
 Of noon that folds its particles inside.
 Strange, but the few are many. Yet they dream
 Of darkness, and of standing unespied,
 Watching the rabble current — envied stream!
 One river! though it is both deep and wide.

Here on the shore, in an imagined night,
 They stand and wrap their arms; but on each face
 Falls the dead flush of a reflected light
 That fringes their aloofness as with lace —
 The memory of a multitude's sweet might;
 The flowing, and the union, and the grace.

The greyness all around them is old mist
 Engendered by the chill of their contempt.
 These were the few that labored to resist,
 And the flood set them, separate and exempt,
 Here on the windless shore — but now they twist
 With a new longing, and the frail attempt,

Returning, to go smoothly once again
 Down the sole river where the lashes close
 And the eyes, sinking, dream of dancing men.
 Yet here they stand in their uneven rows,
 Superior forever — until when
 Death lifts a hollow socket-bone and blows.

GOING HOME

His thought of it was like a button pressed.
 Far away the figures started going;
 A silver watch ticked in a sleepy vest,
 And on the porch an apron string was blowing.

His thought again was like a fly-wheel cranked,
And circular machinery set gliding.

The little town turned truly, as the banked
Brown houses followed in and out of hiding.

His travel, once he went, was like the troop
Of farmers in an autumn to the fair.

All year the field was flat, but now the coop
Of turkeys and the horses would be there;

People moving everywhere and nodding,
Little boys with birds and yellow whips;
A person at a counter would be wadding
Rifles, and the girls would hold their hips.

His coming near was like the soft arrival
Of gods around a thing that they have made;
And will again forget; but long survival
Saves it, once again the trance is laid.

THE DIFFERENCE

Day after day, for her, the sun
Drew semicircles smooth and high.
A week was seven domes across a desert,
And any afternoon took long to die —
Rounding the great curve downward not too fast,
Not falling; not a shadow ran awry.

His day was two thin lightning lines
Pitched here one instant like a tent;
Then night; and there was neither afternoon
Nor evening to be witness how they went.
His day was but a burning at the top;
Then the steep fall, and every spark was spent.

They lived together only thus:
One tick of noon their common day;
And many a noon, so meeting, each would ask:
What found the other past the middle way?
But neither he whose leap was like a star
Nor she who curved and swung could ever say.

THE CONFINEMENT

Whence, whence this heat of the brain?
I know, I know, he said —
The sleeplessness of continents and stars,

Rivers, and oily pavements, and old wars
Across too small a bed.

Whence, whence this fever-sight,
This still inflamed research?
I know. It is the press of the last sphere
To shrink its mighty pride and enter here —
All heaven in a church.

Whence, whence this burning bone,
This furnace in a skull?
Listen! I have heard the chafed complaint
Of thrice too large a cargo, hot and faint
Within too weak a hull.

Whence, whence this little fire
Whereon no fuel is put?
But it is fed with Africa's great groans,
And wrinkle-deep Aldebaran's live moans,
Recessed within a nut.

WIT

Wit is the only wall
Between us and the dark.
Wit is perpetual daybreak
And skylark
Springing off the unshaken stone
Of man's blood and the mind's bone.

Wit is the only breath
That keeps our eyelids warm,
Facing the driven ice
Of an old storm
That blows as ever it has blown
Against imperishable stone.

Wit is the lighted house
Of our triumphant talk,
Where only weakly comes now
The slow walk
Of outer creatures past the stone,
Moving in a tongueless moan.

THE BORE

He was not helped by knowing well
How cold he made us, and how weary.
He must have told himself at last
He was not saved by being sorry.

Better than anyone he saw
The stealthy turn, the trained escape,
Or if he came too soon for these,
How frantic courtesy could wrap

Desire to fly with skill to stay —
A twitching wing beneath the feather ;
How within a greying eye
The kindest agony can gather.

And did he witness this too well ?
Was then the knowledge but the cause ?
Long time we looked, but could not find
A way of learning what he was.

THE FRIENDSHIP

It was so mild a thing to see,
People saw it silently.
Such peace was in it people said
It would not alter with them dead.

None knew the difficult design
They worked to follow, line by line,
Nor in the sending of a glance
How much was art, how little chance ;

Nor how that courtesy was kept
Wherethrough no step was overstepped.
There was no harshness in these hands
That wove a set of silken bands —

Binding honor unto praise,
And tying tenderness, that lays
No single burden on a friend
As far as to the tethered end.

Not a disagreeing word
Between the two was ever heard.
But when it ended with them dead,
Buried bones got up and bled.

E. E. Cummings [1894-]

~~ALWAYS BEFORE YOUR VOICE~~

Always before your voice my soul
half-beautiful and wholly droll
is as some smooth and awkward foal,
whereof young moons begin
the newness of his skin,

so of my stupid sincere youth
the exquisite failure uncouth
discovers a trembling and smooth
Unstrength, against the strong
silences of your song;

or as a single lamb whose sheen
of full unsheared fleece is mean
beside its lovelier friends, between
your thoughts more white than wool
My thought is sorrowful;

but my heart smote in trembling thirds
of anguish quivers to your words,
As to a flight of thirty birds
shakes with a thickening fright
the sudden fooled light.

it is the autumn of a year:
When the thin air is stooped with fear,
across the harvest whitely peer
empty of surprise
death's faultless eyes

(whose hand my folded soul shall know
while on faint hills do frailly go
The peaceful terrors of the snow,
and before your dead face
which sleeps, a dream shall pass)

and these my days their sounds and flowers
Fall in a pride of petaled hours,
like flowers at the feet of mowers
whose bodies strong with love
through meadows hugely move.

yet what am i that such and such
mysteries very simply touch

me, whose heart-wholeness overmuch
Expects of your hair pale,
a terror musical?

while in an earthless hour my fond
soul seriously yearns beyond
this fern of sunset frond on frond
opening in a rare
Slowness of gloried air. . . .

The flute of morning stilled in noon —
noon the implacable bassoon —
now Twilight seeks the thrill of moon,
washed with a wild and thin
despair of violin.

THY FINGERS MAKE EARLY FLOWERS

Thy fingers make early flowers of
all things.

thy hair mostly the hours love :
a smoothness which
sings, saying
(though love be a day)
do not fear, we will go amaying.

thy whitest feet crisply are straying.
Always
thy moist eyes are at kisses playing,
whose strangeness much
says ; singing
(though love be a day)
for which girl art thou flowers bringing ?

To be thy lips is a sweet thing
and small.

Death, thee i call rich beyond wishing
if this thou catch,
else missing.
(though love be a day
and life be nothing, it shall not stop kissing).

ALL IN GREEN WENT MY LOVE RIDING

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the merry deer ran before.

Fleeter be they than dappled dreams
the swift sweet deer
the red rare deer.

Four red roebuck at a white water
the cruel bugle sang before.

Horn at hip went my love riding
riding the echo down
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the level meadows ran before.

Softer be they than slippered sleep
the lean lithe deer
the fleet flown deer.

Four fleet does at a gold valley
the famished arrow sang before.

Bow at belt went my love riding
riding the mountain down
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the sheer peaks ran before.

Paler be they than daunting death
the sleek slim deer
the tall tense deer.

Four tall stags at a green mountain
the lucky hunter sang before.

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
my heart fell dead before.

IT MAY NOT ALWAYS BE SO;
AND I SAY

it may not always be so; and i say
that if your lips, which i have loved, should touch
another's, and your dear strong fingers clutch

his heart, as mine in time not far away;
 if on another's face your sweet hair lay
 in such a silence as i know, or such
 great writhing words as, uttering overmuch,
 stand helplessly before the spirit at bay;

if this should be, i say if this should be —
 you of my heart, send me a little word;
 that i may go unto him, and take his hands,
 saying, Accept all happiness from me.
 Then shall i turn my face, and hear one bird
 sing terribly afar in the lost lands.

"NEXT TO OF COURSE GOD

"next to of course god america i
 love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh
 say can you see by the dawn's early my
 country 'tis of centuries come and go
 and are no more what of it we should worry
 in every language even deafanddumb
 thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry
 by jingo by gee by gosh by gum
 why talk of beauty what could be more beauti-
 ful than these heroic happy dead
 who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter
 they did not stop to think they died instead
 then shall the voices of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water.

THE MOON LOOKED INTO MY WINDOW

the moon looked into my window
 it touched me with its small hands
 and with curling infantile
 fingers it understood my eyes cheeks mouth
 its hands (slipping) felt of my necktie wandered
 against my shirt and into my body the
 sharp things fingered tinily my heart life

the little hands withdrew, jerkily, themselves
 quietly they began playing with a button
 the moon smiled she
 let go my vest and crept
 through the window
 she did not fall

she went creeping along the air
 over houses
 roofs

And out of the east toward
 her a fragile light bent gatheringly

S U P P O S I N G I D R E A M E D T H I S)

supposing i dreamed this)
 only imagine, when day has thrilled
 you are a house around which
 i am a wind —

your walls will not reckon how
 strangely my life is curved
 since the best he can do
 is to peer through windows, `unobserved

— listen, for (out of all
 things) dream is noone's fool ;
 if this wind who i am prowls
 carefully around this house of you

love being such, or such,
 the normal corners of your heart
 will never guess how much
 my wonderful jealousy is dark

if light should flower :
 or laughing sparkle from
 the shut house (around and around
 which a poor wind will roam

I F I H A V E M A D E , M Y L A D Y ,

if i have made, my lady, intricate
 imperfect various things chiefly which wrong
 your eyes (frailer than most deep dreams are frail)
 songs less firm than your body's whitest song
 upon my mind — if i have failed to snare
 the glance too shy — if through my singing slips
 the very skillful strangeness of your smile
 the keen primeval silence of your hair

— let the world say “his most wise music stole
 nothing from death” —

you only will create
 (who are so perfectly alive) my shame :

lady through whose profound and fragile lips
the sweet small clumsy feet of April came
into the ragged meadow of my soul.

O THOU TO WHOM THE MUSICAL WHITE SPRING

O Thou to whom the musical white spring
offers her lily inextinguishable,
taught by thy tremulous grace bravely to fling
Implacable death's mysteriously sable
robe from her redolent shoulders,

Thou from whose
feet reincarnate song suddenly leaping
flameflung, mounts, inimitably to lose
herself where the wet stars softly are keeping

their exquisite dreams — O Love! upon thy dim
shrine of intangible commemoration,
(from whose faint close as some grave languorous hymn
pledged to illimitable dissipation
unhurried clouds of incense fleetly roll)

i spill my bright incalculable soul.

WHEN UNTO NIGHTS OF AUTUMN DO COMPLAIN

when unto nights of autumn do complain
earth's ghastlier trees by whom Time measured is
when frost to dance maketh the sagest pane
of littler huts with peerless fantasies
or the unlovely longness of the year

droops with things dead athwart the narrowing hours
and hope (by cold espoused unto fear)
in dreadful corners hideously cowers —

i do excuse me, love, to Death and Time

storms and rough cold, wind's menace and leaf's grieving :
from the impressed fingers of sublime
Memory, of that loveliness receiving
the image my proud heart cherished as fair.

(The child-head poised with the serious hair)

WHEN THE PROFICIENT POISON OF
SURE SLEEP

when the proficient poison of sure sleep
bereaves us of our slow tranquillities

and He without Whose favour nothing is
(being of men called Love) upward doth leap
from the mute hugeness of depriving deep,
with thunder of those hungering wings of His,
into the lucent and large signories
— i shall not smile beloved ; i shall not weep :
when from the less-than-whiteness of thy face
(whose eyes inherit vacancy) will time
extract his inconsiderable doom,
when these thy lips beautifully embrace
nothing

and when thy bashful hands assume
silence beyond the mystery of rhyme

COME NOTHING TO MY COMPARABLE SOUL

come nothing to my comparable soul
which with existence has conversed in vain,
O scrupulously take thy trivial toll,
for whose cool feet this frantic heart is fain ;
try me with thy perfumes which have seduced
the mightier nostrils of the fervent dead,
feed with felicities me wormperused
to whom the hungering mouth of time is fed :
and if i like not what thou givest me
to him let me complain, whose seat is where
revolving planets struggle to be free
with the astounding everlasting air —
but if i like, i 'll take between thy hands
what no man feels, no woman understands.

SOMEWHERE I HAVE NEVER TRAVELED,
GLADLY BEYOND

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence :
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
 though i have closed myself as fingers,
 you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
 (touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
 my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
 as when the heart of this flower imagines
 the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
 the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
 compels me with the colour of its countries,
 rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
 and opens; only something in me understands
 the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
 nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

Louise Bogan

[1897-]

A TALE

This youth too long has heard the break
 Of waters in a land of change.
 He goes to see what suns can make
 From soil more indurate and strange.

He cuts what holds his days together
 And shuts him in, as lock on lock:
 The arrowed vane announcing weather,
 The tripping racket of a clock;

Seeking, I think, a light that waits
 Still as a lamp upon a shelf,—
 A land with hills like rocky gates
 Where no sea leaps upon itself.

But he will find that nothing dares
 To be enduring, save where, south
 Of hidden deserts, torn fire glares
 On beauty with a rusted mouth,—

Where something dreadful and another
 Look quietly upon each other.

MEDUSA

I had come to the house, in a cave of trees,
Facing a sheer sky.
Everything moved, — a bell hung ready to strike,
Sun and reflection wheeled by.

When the bare eyes were before me
And the hissing hair,
Held up at a window, seen through a door.
The stiff bald eyes, the serpents on the forehead
Formed in the air.

This is a dead scene forever now.
Nothing will ever stir.
The end will never brighten it more than this,
Nor the rain blur.

The water will always fall, and will not fall,
And the tipped bell make no sound.
The grass will always be growing for hay
Deep on the ground.

And I shall stand here like a shadow
Under the great balanced day,
My eyes on the yellow dust that was lifting in the wind,
And does not drift away.

THE FRIGHTENED MAN

In fear of the rich mouth
I kissed the thin, —
Even that was a trap
To snare me in.

Even she, so long
The frail, the scentless,
Is become strong
And proves relentless.

O, forget her praise,
And how I sought her
Through a hazardous maze
By shafted water.

THE ALCHEMIST

I burned my life that I might find
A passion wholly of the mind,

Thought divorced from eye and bone,
Ecstasy come to breath alone.
I broke my life to seek relief
From the flawed light of love and grief.

With mounting beat the utter fire
Charred existence and desire.
It died low, ceased its sudden thresh.
I had found unmysterious flesh —
Not the mind's avid substance — still
Passionate beyond the will.

MEN LOVED WHOLLY BEYOND WISDOM

Men loved wholly beyond wisdom
Have the staff without the banner.
Like a fire in a dry thicket,
Rising within women's eyes
Is the love men must return.
Heart, so subtle now, and trembling,
What a marvel to be wise,
To love never in this manner !
To be quiet in the fern
Like a thing gone dead and still,
Listening to the prisoned cricket
Shake its terrible, dissembling
Music in the granite hill.

W O M E N

Women have no wilderness in them,
They are provident instead,
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts
To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,
They do not hear
Snow water going down under culverts
Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,
They stiffen, when they should bend.
They use against themselves that benevolence
To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field
Or of clean wood cleft by an ax.

Their love is an eager meaninglessness
Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them
A shout and a cry.

As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills
They should let it go by.

SONG

Love me because I am lost ;
Love me that I am undone.
That is brave, — no man has wished it,
Not one.

Be strong, to look on my heart
As others look on my face.
Love me, — I tell you that it is a ravaged
Terrible place.

CASSANDRA

To me, one silly task is like another.
I bare the shambling tricks of lust and pride.
This flesh will never give a child its mother, —
Song, like a wing, tears through my breast, my side,
And madness chooses out my voice again,
Again. I am the chosen no hand saves :
The shrieking heaven lifted over men,
Not the dumb earth, wherein they set their graves.

THE MARK

Where should he seek, to go away
That shadow will not point him down ?
The spear of dark in the strong day
Beyond the upright body thrown,
Marking no epoch but its own.

Loosed only when, at noon and night,
The body is the shadow's prison.
The pivot swings into the light ;
The center left, the shadow risen
To range out into time's long treason.

Stand pinned to sight, while now, unbidden,
The apple loosens, not at call,
Falls to the field, and lies there hidden, —

Another and another fall
And lie there hidden, in spite of all

The diagram of whirling shade,
The visible, that thinks to spin
Forever webs that time has made
Though momently time wears them thin
And all at length are gathered in.

SIMPLE AUTUMNAL

The measured blood beats out the year's delay.
The tearless eyes and heart forbidden grief,
Watch the burned, restless, but abiding leaf,
The brighter branches arming the bright day.

The cone, the curving fruit should fall away,
The vine-stem crumble, ripe grain know its sheaf.
Bonded to time, fires should have done, be brief,
But, serfs to sleep, they glitter and they stay

Because not last nor first, grief in its prime
Wakes in the day, and knows of life's intent.
Anguish would break the seal stamped over time
And bring the baskets where the bough is bent.

Full seasons come, yet filled trees keep the sky,
And never scent the ground where they must lie.

FOR A MARRIAGE

She gives most dangerous sight
To keep his life awake:
A sword sharp-edged and bright
That darkness must not break,
Not ever for her sake.

With it he sees, deep-hidden,
The sullen other blade
To every eye forbidden,
That half her life has made,
And until now obeyed.

Now he will know his part:
Tougher than bone or wood,
To clasp on that barbed heart
That once shed its own blood
In its own solitude.

I SAW ETERNITY

O Beautiful Forever !
 O grandiose Everlasting !
 Now, now, now,
 I break you into pieces,
 I feed you to the ground.

O brilliant, O languishing
 Cycle of weeping light !
 The mice and birds will eat you,
 And you will spoil their stomachs
 As you have spoiled my mind.

Here, mice, rats,
 Porcupines and toads,
 Moles, shrews, squirrels,
 Weasels, turtles, lizards, —
 Here 's bright Everlasting !
 Here 's a crumb of Forever !
 Here 's a crumb of Forever !

OLD COUNTRYSIDE

Beyond the hour we counted rain that fell
 On the slant shutter, all has come to proof.
 The summer thunder, like a wooden bell,
 Rang in the storm above the mansard roof,

And mirrors cast the cloudy day along
 The attic floor ; wind made the clapboards creak.
 You braced against the wall to make it strong,
 A shell against your cheek.

Long since, we pulled brown oak-leaves to the ground
 In a winter of dry trees ; we heard the cock
 Shout its unplaceable cry, the axe's sound
 Delay a moment after the axe's stroke.

Far back, we saw, in the stillest of the year,
 The scrawled vine shudder, and the rose-branch show
 Red to the thorns, and, sharp as sight can bear,
 The thin hound's body arched against the snow.

Stephen Vincent Benét [1898-]

THE BALLAD OF WILLIAM SYCAMORE
(1790-1871)

My father, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer ;
He was quick on his feet as a running deer,
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.

My mother, she was merry and brave,
And so she came to her labor,
With a tall green fir for her doctor grave
And a stream for her comforting neighbor.

And some are wrapped in the linen fine,
And some like a godling's scion ;
But I was cradled on twigs of pine
In the skin of a mountain lion.

And some remember a white, starched lap
And a ewer with silver handles ;
But I remember a coonskin cap
And the smell of bayberry candles.

The cabin logs, with the bark still rough,
And my mother who laughed at trifles,
And the tall, lank visitors, brown as snuff,
With their long, straight squirrel-rifles.

I can hear them dance, like a foggy song,
Through the deepest one of my slumbers,
The fiddle squeaking the boots along
And my father calling the numbers.

The quick feet shaking the puncheon-floor,
And the fiddle squealing and squealing,
Till the dried herbs rattled above the door
And the dust went up to the ceiling.

There are children lucky from dawn till dusk,
But never a child so lucky !
For I cut my teeth on "Money Musk"
In the Bloody Ground of Kentucky !

When I grew tall as the Indian corn,
My father had little to lend me,
But he gave me his great, old powder-horn
And his woodsman's skill to befriend me.

With a leather shirt to cover my back,
And a redskin nose to unravel
Each forest sign, I carried my pack
As far as a scout could travel.

Till I lost my boyhood and found my wife,
A girl like a Salem clipper!
A woman straight as a hunting-knife
With eyes as bright as the Dipper!

We cleared our camp where the buffalo feed,
Unheard-of streams were our flagons;
And I sowed my sons like the apple-seed
On the trail of the Western wagons.

They were right, tight boys, never sulky or slow,
A fruitful, a goodly muster.
The eldest died at the Alamo.
The youngest fell with Custer.

The letter that told it burned my hand.
Yet we smiled and said, "So be it!"
But I could not live when they fenced the land,
For it broke my heart to see it.

I saddled a red, unbroken colt
And rode him into the day there,
And he threw me down like a thunderbolt
And rolled on me as I lay there.

The hunter's whistle hummed in my ear
As the city-men tried to move me,
And I died in my boots like a pioneer
With the whole wide sky above me.

Now I lie in the heart of the fat, black soil,
Like the seed of a prairie-thistle;
It has washed my bones with honey and oil
And picked them clean as a whistle.

And my youth returns, like the rains of Spring,
And my sons, like the wild-geese flying;
And I lie and hear the meadow-lark sing
And have much content in my dying.

Go play with the towns you have built of blocks,
The towns where you would have bound me!
I sleep in my earth like a tired fox,
And my buffalo have found me.

THE MOUNTAIN WHIPPOORWILL
OR, HOW HILL-BILLY JIM WON THE GREAT
FIDDLERS' PRIZE

(*A Georgia Romance*)

Up in the mountains, it's lonesome all the time,
(Sof' win' slewin' thu' the sweet-potato vine).

Up in the mountains, it's lonesome for a child,
(Whippoorwills a-callin' when the sap runs wild).

Up in the mountains, mountains in the fog,
Everythin' 's as lazy as an old houn' dog.

Born in the mountains, never raised a pet,
Don't want nuthin' an' never got it yet.

Born in the mountains, lonesome-born,
Raised runnin' ragged thu' the cockleburrs and corn.

Never knew my pappy, mebbe never should.
Think he was a fiddle made of mountain laurel-wood.

Never had a mammy to teach me pretty-please.
Think she was a whippoorwill, a-skitin' thu' the trees.

Never had a brother ner a whole pair of pants,
But when I start to fiddle, why, yuh got to start to dance!

*Listen to my fiddle — Kingdom Come — Kingdom Come!
Hear the frogs a-chunkin' "Jug o' rum, Jug o' rum!"
Hear that mountain-whippoorwill be lonesome in the air,
An' I'll tell yuh how I traveled to the Essex County Fair.*

Essex County has a mighty pretty fair,
All the smarty fiddlers from the South come there.

Elbows flyin' as they rosin up the bow
For the First Prize Contest in the Georgia Fiddlers' Show.

Old Dan Wheeling, with his whiskers in his ears,
King-pin fiddler for nearly twenty years.

Big Tom Sargent, with his blue wall-eye,
An' Little Jimmy Weezer that can make a fiddle cry.

*All sittin' roun', spittin' high an' struttin' proud,
(Listen, little whippoorwill, yuh better bug yore eyes!)
Tun-a-tun-a-tunin' while the jedges told the crowd
Them that got the mostest claps 'd win the bestest prize.*

Everybody waitin' for the first tweedle-dee,
When in comes a-stumblin' — hill-billy me!

Bowed right pretty to the jedges an' the rest,
Took a silver dollar from a hole inside my vest,

Plunked it on the table an' said, "There 's my callin' card!
An' anyone that licks me — well, he 's got to fiddle hard!"

Old Dan Wheeling, he was laughin' fit to holler,
Little Jimmy Weezer said, "There 's one dead dollar!"

Big Tom Sargent had a yaller-toothy grin,
But I tucked my little whippoorwill spang underneath my chin,
An' petted it an' tuned it till the jedges said, "Begin!"

Big Tom Sargent was the first in line;
He could fiddle all the bugs off a sweet-potato vine.
He could fiddle down a possum from a mile-high tree.
He could fiddle up a whale from the bottom of the sea.

Yuh could hear hands spankin' till they spanked each other raw,
When he finished variations on "Turkey in the Straw."

Little Jimmy Weezer was the next to play;
He could fiddle all night, he could fiddle all day.

He could fiddle chills, he could fiddle fever,
He could make a fiddle rustle like a lowland river.

He could make a fiddle croon like a lovin' woman.
An' they clapped like thunder when he 'd finished strummin'.

Then came the ruck of the bob-tailed fiddlers,
The let 's go-easies, the fair-to-middlers.

They got their claps an' they lost their bicker,
An' settled back for some more corn-licker.

An' the crowd was tired of their no-count squealing,
When out in the center steps Old Dan Wheeling.

*He fiddled high and he fiddled low,
(Listen, little whippoorwill; yuh got to spread yore wings!)
He fiddled with a cherrywood bow.
(Old Dan Wheeling 's got bee-honey in his strings.)*

He fiddled the wind by the lonesome moon,
He fiddled a most almighty tune.

He started fiddling like a ghost,
He ended fiddling like a host.

He fiddled north an' he fiddled south,
He fiddled the heart right out of yore mouth.

He fiddled here an' he fiddled there.
He fiddled salvation everywhere.

*When he was finished, the crowd cut loose,
(Whippoorwill, they's rain on yore breast.)
An' I sat there wonderin', "What's the use?
(Whippoorwill, fly home to yore nest.)*

But I stood up pert an' I took my bow,
An' my fiddle went to my shoulder, so.

An' — they was n't no crowd to get me fazed —
But I was alone where I was raised.

Up in the mountains, so still it makes yuh skeered.
Where God lies sleepin' in his big white beard.

An' I heard the sound of the squirrel in the pine,
An' I heard the earth a-breathin' thu' the long night-time.

They've fiddled the rose an' they've fiddled the thorn,
But they have n't fiddled the mountain-corn.

They've fiddled sinful an' fiddled moral,
But they have n't fiddled the breshwood-laurel.

They've fiddled loud, an' they've fiddled still,
But they have n't fiddled the whippoorwill.

I started off with a *dump-diddle-dump*,
(Oh, Hell's broke loose in Georgia!)
Skunk-cabbage growin' by the bee-gum stump,
(Whippoorwill, yo're singin' now!)

Oh, Georgia booze is mighty fine booze,
The best yuh ever poured yuh,
But it eats the soles right offen yore shoes,
For Hell's broke loose in Georgia.

My mother was a whippoorwill pert,
My father, he was lazy,
But I'm Hell broke loose in a new store shirt
To fiddle all Georgia crazy.

Swing yore partners — up an' down the middle!
Sashay now — oh, listen to that fiddle!
Flapjacks flippin' on a red-hot griddle,
An' hell broke loose,

Hell broke loose,
 Fire on the mountains — snakes in the grass.
 Satin 's here a-bilin' — oh, Lordy, let him pass !
 Go down Moses, set my people free,
 Pop goes the weasel thu' the old Red Sea !
 Jonah sittin' on a hickory-bough,
 Up jumps a whale — an' where 's yore prophet now ?
 Rabbit in the pea-patch, possum in the pot,
 Try an' stop my fiddle, now my fiddle 's gettin' hot !
 Whippoorwill, singin' thu' the mountain hush,
 Whippoorwill, shoutin' from the burnin' bush,
 Whippoorwill, cryin' in the stable-door,
 Sing to-night as yuh never sang before !
 Hell 's broke loose like a stompin' mountain-shoat,
 Sing till yuh bust the gold in yore throat !
 Hell 's broke loose for forty miles aroun'
 Bound to stop yore music if yuh don't sing it down.
 Sing on the mountains, little whippoorwill,
 Sing to the valleys, an' slap 'em with a hill,
 For I 'm struttin' high as an eagle's quill,
 An' Hell 's broke loose,
 Hell 's broke loose,
 Hell 's broke loose in Georgia !

They was n't a sound when I stopped bowin',
(Whippoorwill, yuh can sing no more.)
 But, somewhere or other, the dawn was growin',
(Oh, mountain whippoorwill !)

An' I thought, "I 've fiddled all night an' lost.
 Yo 're a good hill-billy, but yuh 've been bossed."

So I went to congratulate old man Dan,
 — But he put his fiddle into my han' —
 An' then the noise of the crowd began.

Léonie Adams

[1899—]

THOSE NOT ELECT

Never, being damned, see Paradise.
 The heart will sweeten at its look ;
 Nor hell was known, till Paradise
 Our senses shook.

Never hear angels at laughter,
 For how comports with grief to know

Wisdom in heaven bends to laughter, laughter,
Laughter upon woe?

Never fall dreaming on celestials,
Lest, bound in a ruinous place,
You turn to wander with celestials
Down holy space.

Never taste that fruit with the soul
Whereof the body may not eat,
Lest flesh at length lay waste the soul
In its sick heat.

A GULL GOES UP

Gulls when they fly move in a liquid arc,
Still head, and wings that bend above the breast,
Covering its glitter with a cloak of dark,
Gulls fly. So as at last toward balm and rest,
Remembering wings, the desperate leave their earth,
Bear from their earth what there was ruinous-crossed,
Peace from distress, and love from nothing-worth,
Fast at the heart, its jewels of dear cost.
Gulls go up hushed to that entrancing flight,
With never a feather of all the body stirred.
So in an air less rare than longing might
The dream of flying lift a marble bird.
Desire it is that flies; then wings are freight
That only bear the feathered heart no weight.

DEATH AND THE LADY

Their bargain told again

Death to the Lady said
While she to dancing-measures still
Would move, while beauties on her lay,
Simply as dews the buds do fill,
Death said: "Stay!
Tell me, Lady,
If in your breast the lively breath
May flicker for a little space,
What ransom will you give to death,
Lady?" he said.
"O not one joy, O not one grace,
And what is your will to my will?
I can outwit parched fancies still."
To Death said the Lady.

Death to that Lady said,
 When blood went numb and wearily,
 "In innocence dear breath you drew,
 And marrow and bloom you rendered me,"
 She said: "True."
 "How now, Lady?"
 "My heart sucked up its sweet at will,
 Whose scent when substance' sweet is past,
 Is lovely still, is lovely still,
 Death," she said.
 "For bones' reprieve the dreams go last:
 Soon, soon your flowery show did part,
 But preciously I cull the heart,"
 Death said to the Lady.

Death to that Lady said:
 "Is then not all our bargain done?
 Or why do you beckon me so fast
 To chaffer for a skeleton
 Flesh must cast,
 Ghostly Lady?"
 "For, Death, that I would have you drain
 From my dead heart the blood that stands
 So chilly in the withered vein.
 And, Death," she said,
 "Give my due bones into your hands."
 "Beauties I claim at morning-prime,
 But the lack-luster in good time,"
 Death said to the Lady.

COMPANIONS OF THE MORASS

I have seen also your angel,
 In the isolation where we had descended
 To frequent the naked heart.
 Many a time a dove from the thorny branches,
 And now one dewy, feathery, tender,
 From your eyes will start.

The earth is heavy, and the clouds drop rime,
 And night descends without stars;
 What does it see, white creature, what do you see, O eyes?
 For so at the innocent lady's feet
 The blond, the young, delicate ones of heaven,
 Stare on the pretty painted skies.

It is a ground getting demons, but we call no honest demon,
 We cannot conjure the swart breed;
 The brooding devil at our heels has trod,
 But it is he, lord of the circumscribed pit.
 Here where holy and unholy are as weak as water,
 We encounter the damned god.

It is said, by pinioning the angels
 They keep the terrible footway; it is said,
 The hardy have traversed the morass,
 They that cast out devils to live without sin;
 But we, coming between the devil ashamed
 And a strayed angel, shall not pass.

How shall we forsake this angel and this devil?
 You bottomless tarnished lustre,
 And bosom pressed upon the hollow cloud,
 How do you visit us, symbols without body?
 We are weak earth, we run before the wind
 By which our hearts were bowed.

QUIET

Since I took quiet to my breast
 My heart lies in me, heavier
 Than stone sunk fast in sluggish sand,
 That the sea's self may never stir,
 When she sweeps hungrily to land,
 Since I took quiet to my breast.

Strange quiet, when I made thee guest,
 My heart had countless strings to fret
 Under a least wind's fingering.
 How could I know I would forget
 To catch breath at a gull's curved wing,
 Strange quiet, when I made thee guest?

Thou, quiet, hast no gift of rest.
 The pain that at thy healing fled
 More dear was to my heart than pride.
 Now for its loss my heart is dead,
 And I keep horrid watch beside.
 Thou, quiet, hast no gift of rest.

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
 Dusk went before with quiet tread;
 The bare laced branches of the trees
 Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
 Like great gray sheep lay silent-wise;
 Between the birch trees' gleaming arms
 The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
 And laughed as one that knew me well,
 To whose more clear than crystal voice
 The frost had joined a crystal spell.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
 Dusk ran before me to its strand
 And cloudily leaned forth to touch
 The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

APRIL MORTALITY

Rebellion shook an ancient dust,
 And bones bleached dry of rottenness
 Said: Heart, be bitter still, nor trust
 The earth, the sky, in their bright dress.

Heart, heart, dost thou not break to know
 This anguish thou wilt bear alone?
 We sang of it an age ago,
 And traced it dimly upon stone.

With all the drifting race of men
 Thou also art begot to mourn
 That she is crucified again,
 The lonely Beauty yet unborn.

And if thou dreamest to have won
 Some touch of her in permanence,
 'T is the old cheating of the sun,
 The intricate lovely play of sense.

Be bitter still, remember how
 Four petals, when a little breath
 Of wind made stir the pear-tree bough,
 Blew delicately down to death.

NEVER ENOUGH OF LIVING

Never, my heart, is there enough of living,
 Since only in thee is loveliness so sweet pain ;
 Only for thee the willows will be giving
 Their quiet fringes to the dreaming river ;
 Only for thee so the light grasses ever
 Are hollowed by the print of windy feet,
 And breathe hill weather on the misty plain ;
 And were no rapture of them in thy beat,
 For every hour of sky
 Stillborn in gladness would the waters wear
 Colors of air translucently,
 And the stars sleep there.

Gently, my heart, nor let one moment ever
 Be spilled from the brief fullness of thine urn.
 Plunge in its exultation star and star,
 Sea and plumed sea in turn.
 O still, my heart, nor spill this moment ever.

GHOSTLY TREE

O beech, unbind your yellow leaf, for deep
 The honeyed time lies sleeping, and lead shade
 Seals up the eyelids of its golden sleep.
 Long are your flutes, chimes, little bells at rest,
 And here is only the cold scream of the fox,
 Only the hunter following on the hound,
 And your quaint-plumaged,
 The bird that your green happy boughs lapped round,
 Bends south its soft bright breast.

Before the winter and the terror break,
 Scatter the leaf that broadened with the rose,
 Not for a tempest, but a sigh to take.
 Four nights to exorcise the thing that stood,
 Bound by these frail which dangle at your branch,
 They ran a frosty dagger to its heart,
 And it, wan substance,
 No more remembered it might cry, or start,
 Or stain a point with blood.

VALHALLA FOR THE LIVING

Today he sickens with his hurt,
 And straight behind the ribs it drove,
 Tipped with more bitter mystery

Than a fresh heart is master of;
But only once young hardihood
Can seem to cost the heart its blood.

For time will mix his blood with wit,
And easy will he rise and go
To have a dozen merry wars,
And never wincing for the foe.
So all the ghostly heroes play
Whose wounds are healed at close of day.

SEND FORTH THE HIGH FALCON

Send forth the high falcon flying after the mind
To topple it from its cold cloud :
The beak of the falcon to pierce it till it fall
Where the simple heart is bowed.
O in wild innocence it rides
The rare ungovernable element,
But once it sways to terror and descent,
The marches of the wind are its abyss,
No wind staying it upward of the breast —
Let mind be proud for this,
And ignorant from what fabulous cause it dropt
And with how learned a gesture the unschooled heart
Shall lull both terror and innocence to rest.

TIME AND SPIRIT

Spirit going with me here,
If thou tellest time aright,
It 's by some ancestral clock
Older than the golden sun,
And his measure trod with night.

Rarely by my calendar
Bite or sup for thee is spread,
Yet thou comst not grace forgone
As the jostling starvelings do,
But most mannerly art fed.

Half my store consumes to keep
This poor lamp which warmeth me.
Thou that takst no thought to live
In a delicate excess
Spendst more brightness than I see.

How should thou and I keep step?
 Three score ten was set my race
 Of just distancing the worm;
 But a lifetime to a sphere
 Lends a more exalted pace.

Allen Tate

[1899-]

M R. POPE

When Alexander Pope strolled in the city
 Strict was the glint of pearl and gold sedans;
 Ladies leaned out, more out of fear than pity,
 For Pope's tight back was rather a goat's than man's.

Often one thinks the urn should have more bones
 Than skeletons provide for speedy dust,
 The urn gets hollow, cobwebs brittle as stones
 Weave to the funeral shell a frivolous rust.

And he who dribbled couplets like a snake
 Coiled to a lithe precision in the sun,
 Is missing. The jar is empty; you may break
 It only to find that Mr. Pope is gone.

What requisitions of a verity
 Prompted the wit and rage between his teeth
 One cannot say: around a crooked tree
 A moral climbs whose name should be a wreath.

D E A T H O F L I T T L E B O Y S

When little boys grown patient at last, weary,
 Surrender their eyes immeasurably to the night,
 The event will rage terrific as the sea;
 Their bodies fill a crumbling room with light.

Then you will touch, at the bedside, torn in two,
 Gold curls now deftly intricate with gray
 As the windowpane extends a fear to you
 From one peeled aster drenched with the wind all day.

And over his chest the covers in an ultimate dream
 Will mount to the teeth, ascend the eyes, press back
 The locks — while round his sturdy belly gleam
 The suspended breaths, white spars above the wreck,

Till all the guests, come in to look, turn down
 Their palms, and delirium assails the cliff
 Of Norway where you ponder; your little town
 Reels like a sailor drunk in a rotten skiff.

The bleak sunshine shrieks its chipped music then
 Out to the milkweed amid the fields of wheat.
 There is a calm for you where men and women
 Unroll the chill precision of moving feet.

O B I T U A R Y

In Mem. S.B.V. 1834-1909

. . . so what the lame four-poster gathered here
 Between the lips of stale and seasoned sheets
 Startles a memory sunlit upon the wall.
 (Motors and urchins contest the city streets)

While towards the bed the rigid shadows lean
 Stung to the patience of all emptiness
 Memorially arrested where she slept,
 Jerky gnats plunge through the haggard screen.

And now upstairs the lint that crusts the sills
 Erodes to a windy shift along the floor,
 Her touselled eyes no longer rinse the haze
 Of winter sprawled like a carcass by the door;

Feet, thickly alternate, are withdrawn
 To the hard ease of lacquered pine that clamps
 The shuffled fists into the breast and neck

(Time begins to elucidate her bones)
 Then you, so crazy and inviolate,
 Will finger the console with a number touch,
 Go by the horsehair sofa, the gilded frames
 Whose faces are sweet names
 For the life-blood that labors you so much.

D I T T Y

The moon will run all consciences to cover
 Night is now the easy peer of day,
 Little boys no longer sight the plover
 Streaked in the sky, and cattle go
 Warily out in search of misty hay.
 Look to the blackbird, the pretty, eager swallow,

The buzzard, and all the birds that sail
 With the smooth essential flow
 Of time through men, who fail.

For now the moon with friendless light carouses
 On hill and housetop, street and marketplace,
 Men will plunge, mile after mile of men,
 To crush this lucent madness of the face,
 Go home and put their heads upon the pillow,
 Turn with whatever shift the darkness cleaves,
 Tuck in their eyes, and cover
 The flying dark with sleep like falling leaves.

TO A ROMANTICIST

You hold your eager head
 Too high in the air, you walk
 As if the sleepy dead
 Had never fallen to drowse
 From the sublimest talk
 Of many a vehement house.
 Your head so turned turns eyes
 Into the vagrant West;
 Fixing an iron mood
 In Ozymandias' breast
 And because your clamorous blood
 Beats an impermanent rest
 You think the dead arise
 Westward and fabulous:
 The dead are those whose lies
 Were doors to a narrow house.

LAST DAYS OF ALICE

Alice grown lazy, mammoth but not fat,
 Declines upon her lost and twilit age,
 Above in the dozing leaves the grinning cat
 Quivers forever with his abstract rage;

Whatever light swayed on the perilous gate
 Forever sways, nor will the arching grass
 Caught when the world clattered, undulate
 In the deep suspension of the looking-glass.

Bright Alice! always pondering to gloze
 The spoiled cruelty she had meant to say
 Gazes learnedly down her airy nose
 At nothing, nothing thinking all the day:

Turned absent-minded by infinity
 She cannot move unless her double move,
 The All-Alice of the world's entity
 Smashed in the anger of her hopeless love

Love for herself who as an earthly twain
 Pouted to join her two in a sweet one:
 No more the second lips to kiss in vain
 The first she broke, plunged to the glass alone —

Alone to the weight of impassivity
 Incest of spirit, theorem of desire
 Without will as chalky cliffs by the sea
 Empty as the bodiless flesh of fire;

All space, that heaven is a dayless night
 A nightless day driven by perfect lust
 For vacancy, in which her dull eyesight
 Stares at the drowsy cubes of human dust.

We, too, back to the world shall never pass
 Through the splintered door, a dumb shade-harried crowd,
 Being all infinite, function, depth and mass
 Without figure; a mathematical shroud

Hurled at the air; blessed without sin:
 O God of our flesh, return us to your wrath
 Let us be evil, could we enter in
 Your grace, and falter on the stony path!

THE PARADIGM

For when they meet, the tensile air
 Like fine steel strains under the weight
 Of messages that both hearts bear
 Pure passion once now purest hate

Till the taut air like a cold hand
 Clasped to cold hand and bone to bone
 Seals them up in their icy land
 A few square feet, where into stone

The two hearts turning swiftly pass
 Once more their impenetrable world:
 So fading each heart's looking-glass
 Whose image is the surface hurled

By all the air ; air, glass is not ;
 So is their fleeting enmity
 Like a hard mirror crashed by what
 The quality of air must be.

For in the air all lovers meet
 After they 've hated out their love,
 Love 's but the echo of retreat
 Caught by the sunbeam stretched above

Their frozen exile from the earth,
 And lost. Each is the other's crime :
 This is their equity in birth,
 Hate is its ignorant paradigm.

THE WOLVES

There are wolves in the next room waiting
 With heads bent low, thrust out, breathing
 At nothing in the dark : between them and me
 A white door patched with light from the hall
 Where it seems never (so still is the house)
 A man has walked from the front door to the stair.
 It has all been forever. A beast claws the floor.
 I have brooded on angels and archfiends
 But no man has ever sat where the next room's
 Crowded with wolves, and for the honor of man
 I affirm that never have I before. Now while
 I have looked for the evening star at a cold window
 And whistled when Arcturus spilt his light,
 I 've heard the wolves scuffle, and said : So this
 Is man ; so — what better conclusion is there —
 The day will not follow night, and the heart
 Of man has a little dignity, but less patience
 Than a wolf's, and a duller sense that cannot
 Smell its own mortality. (This and other
 Meditations will be suited to other times
 After dog silence howls my epitaph)
 Now remember courage, go to the door,
 Open it and see whether coiled on the bed
 Or cringing by the wall a savage beast
 Maybe with golden hair, with deep eyes
 Like a bearded spider on a sunlit floor,
 Will snarl — and man can never be alone.

THE CROSS

There is a place that some men know,
 I cannot see the whole of it
 Nor how I came there. Long ago
 Flame burst out of a secret pit
 Crushing the world with such a light
 The day sky fell to moonless black,
 The kingly sun to hateful night
 For those, once seeing, turning back :
 For love so hates mortality,
 Which is the providence of life,
 She will not let it blessedèd be
 But curses it with mortal strife,
 Until beside the blinding rood
 Within that world-destroying pit
 — Like young wolves that have tasted blood,
 Of death, men taste no more of it ;
 So blind, in so severe a place,
 (All life before in the black grave)
 The last alternatives the face
 Of life, without life to save,
 Being from all salvation weaned —
 A stag charged both at heel and head ;
 Who would come back is turned a fiend
 Instructed by the fiery dead.

EMBLEMS

I

Maryland Virginia Caroline
 Pent images in sleep
 Clay valleys rocky hills old-fields of pine
 Unspeakable, and deep

Out of that source of time my farthest blood
 Runs strangely to this day
 Unkempt the fathers waste in solitude
 Under the hills of clay

Far from their woe fled to its thither side
 To a river in Tennessee
 In an alien house I will stay
 Yet find their breath to be
 All that my stars betide —
 There some time to abide
 Took wife and child with me.

II

When it is all over and the blood
 Runs out, do not bury this man
 By the far river (where never stood
 His fathers) flowing to the west
 But take him east where life began,
 O my brothers there is rest
 In the depths of an eastward river
 That I can understand; only
 Do not think the truth we hold
 I hold the slighter for this lonely
 Reservation of the heart,
 Men cannot live forever
 But they must die forever
 So take this body, at sunset,
 To the great stream whose pulses start
 In the blue hills, and let
 These ashes drift from the Long Bridge
 Where only a late gull breaks
 That deep and populous grave
 Whose heart with memory shakes.

III

By the great river the forefathers to beguile
 Them, being inconceivably young, carved out
 Deep hollows of memory on a river isle
 Now lost, their murmurs the ghost of a shout

In the hollows where the forefathers
 Without beards their eyes bright and long
 Lay down at sunset by the green river
 In the tall willows amid bird-song

And the long sleep by the cool river
 They 've slept full and long, till now the air
 Waits twilit for their echo — the burning shiver
 Of August strikes like a hawk the crouching hare.

ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD

Row after row with strict impunity
 The headstones yield their names to the element,
 The wind whirrs without recollection;
 In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
 Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
 To the seasonal eternity of death,
 Then driven by the fierce scrutiny

Of heaven to their business in the vast breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality.

Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres where these memories grow
From the inexhaustible bodies that are not
Dead, but feed the grass row after rich row :
Remember now the autumns that have gone —
Ambitious November with the humors of the year,
With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm there :
The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you like them to stone,
Transforms the heaving air,
Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly,
Heaving like the blind crab.

Dazed by the wind, only the wind
The leaves flying, plunge

You know who have waited by the wall
The twilit certainty of an animal ;
Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know — the immittigable pines, the smoky frieze
Of the sky, the sudden call ; you know the rage —
The cold pool left by the mounting flood —
The rage of Zeno and Parmenides.
You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours tomorrow,
You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision
And praise the arrogant circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision —
Here by the sagging gate, stopped by the wall.

Seeing, seeing only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising
Demons out of the earth — they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall, and the sunken fields of hemp,
Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run.
Lost in that orient of the thick and fast
You will curse the setting sun.

Cursing only the leaves crying
Like an old man in a storm

You hear the shout — the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Smotheres you, a mummy, in time. You, the hound bitch
Toothless and dying, in a musty cellar
Hears the wind only.

Now that the salt of their blood

Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we, who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe,
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the bones, unclean
— Their verdurous anonymity will grow —
The ragged arms, the ragged heads and eyes
Lost in these acres of the insane green?
The gray lean spiders come ; they come and go ;
In a tangle of willows without light
The singular screech-owl's bright
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

We shall say only, the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

We shall say only, the leaves whispering
In the improbable mist of nightfall
That flies on multiple wing :
Night is the beginning and the end,
And in between the ends of distraction
Waits mute speculation, the patient curse
That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
For his own image in a jungle pool, his victim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now

The turnstile and the old stone wall :
The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry bush,
Riots with his tongue through the hush —
Sentinel of the grave who counts us all !

Hart Crane

[1899-1932]

LEGEND

As silent as a mirror is believed
 Realities plunge in silence by . . .

I am not ready for repentance ;
 Nor to match regrets. For the moth
 Bends no more than the still
 Imploring flame. And tremorous
 In the white falling flakes
 Kisses are,—
 The only worth all granting.

It is to be learned —
 This cleaving and this burning,
 But only by the one who
 Spends out himself again.

Twice and twice
 (Again the smoking souvenir,
 Bleeding eidolon !) and yet again.

Until the bright logic is won
 Unwhispering as a mirror
 Is believed.

Then, drop by caustic drop, a perfect cry
 Shall string some constant harmony, —
 Relentless caper for all those who step
 The legend of their youth into the noon.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S LOVE LETTERS

There are no stars to-night
 But those of memory.
 Yet how much room for memory there is
 In the loose girdle of soft rain.

There is even room enough
 For the letters of my mother's mother,
 Elizabeth,
 That have been pressed so long
 Into a corner of the roof
 That they are brown and soft,
 And liable to melt as snow.

Over the greatness of such space
 Steps must be gentle.
 It is all hung by an invisible white hair.
 It trembles as birch limbs webbing the air.

And I ask myself :

“Are your fingers long enough to play
 Old keys that are but echoes :
 Is the silence strong enough

To carry back the music to its source
 And back to you again
 As though to her ? ”

Yet I would lead my grandmother by the hand
 Through much of what she would not understand ;
 And so I stumble. And the rain continues on the roof
 With such a sound of gently pitying laughter.

PRAISE FOR AN URN

IN MEMORIAM: ERNEST NELSON

It was a kind and northern face
 That mingled in such exile guise
 The everlasting eyes of Pierrot
 And, of Gargantua, the laughter.

His thoughts, delivered to me
 From the white coverlet and pillow,
 I see now, were inheritances —
 Delicate riders of the storm.

The slant moon on the slanting hill
 Once moved us toward presentiments
 Of what the dead keep, living still,
 And such assessments of the soul

As, perched in the crematory lobby,
 The insistent clock commented on,
 Touching as well upon our praise
 Of glories proper to the time.

Still, having in mind gold hair,
 I cannot see that broken brow
 And miss the dry sound of bees
 Stretching across a lucid space.

Scatter these well-meant idioms
 Into the smoky spring that fills
 The suburbs, where they will be lost.
 They are no trophies of the sun.

REPOSE OF RIVERS

The willows carried a slow sound,
 A sarabande the wind mowed on the mead.
 I could never remember
 That seething, steady leveling of the marshes
 Till age had brought me to the sea.

Flags, weeds. And remembrance of steep alcoves
 Where cypresses shared the noon's
 Tyranny; they drew me into hades almost.
 And mammoth turtles climbing sulphur dreams
 Yielded, while sun-silt ripples them
 Asunder . . .

How much I would have bartered! the black gorge
 And all the singular nestings in the hills
 Where beavers learn stitch and tooth.
 The pond I entered once and quickly fled —
 I remember now its singing willow rim.

And finally, in that memory all things nurse;
 After the city that I finally passed
 With scalding unguents spread and smoking darts
 The monsoon cut across the delta
 At gulf gates . . . There, beyond the dykes

I heard wind flaking sapphire, like this summer,
 And willows could not hold more steady sound.

PARAPHRASE

Of a steady winking beat between
 Systole, diastole spokes-of-a-wheel
 One rushing from the bed at night
 May find the record wedged in his soul.

Above the feet the clever sheets
 Lie guard upon the integers of life:
 For what skims in between uncurls the toe,
 Involves the hands in purposeless repose.

But from its bracket how can the tongue tell
 When systematic morn shall sometime flood
 The pillow — how desperate is the light
 That shall not rouse, how faint the crow's cavil

As, when stunned in that antarctic blaze,
 Your head, unrocking to a pulse, already
 Hollowed by air, posts a white paraphrase
 Among bruised roses on the papered wall.

RECITATIVE

Regard the capture here, O Janus-faced,
 As double as the hands that twist this glass.
 Such eyes at search or rest you cannot see ;
 Reciting pain or glee, how can you bear !

Twin shadowed halves : the breaking second holds
 In each the skin alone, and so it is
 I crust a plate of vibrant mercury
 Borne cleft to you, and brother in the half.

Inquire this much-exacting fragment smile,
 Its drums and darkest blowing leaves ignore, —
 Defer though, revocation of the tears
 That yield attendance to one crucial sign.

Look steadily — how the wind feasts and spins
 The brain's disk shivered against lust. Then watch
 While darkness, like an ape's face, falls away,
 And gradually white buildings answer day.

Let the same nameless gulf beleaguer us —
 Alike suspend us from atrocious sums
 Built floor by floor on shafts of steel that grant
 The plummet heart, like Absalom, no stream.

The highest tower, — let her ribs palisade
 Wrenched gold of Nineveh ; — yet leave the tower.
 The bridge swings over salvage, beyond wharves ;
 A wind abides the ensign of your will . . .

In alternating bells have you not heard
 All hours clapped dense into a single stride ?
 Forgive me for an echo of these things,
 And let us walk through time with equal pride.

AT MELVILLE'S TOMB

Often beneath the wave, wide from this ledge
 The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath
 An embassy. Their numbers as he watched,
 Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured.

And wrecks passed without sound of bells,
 The calyx of death's bounty giving back
 A scattered chapter, lived hieroglyph,
 The portent wound in corridors of shells.

Then in the circuit calm of one vast coil,
 Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,
 Forested eyes there were that lifted altars ;
 And silent answers crept across the stars.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive
 No farther tides . . . High in the azure steeps
 Monody shall not wake the mariner.
 This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.

TO BROOKLYN BRIDGE

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
 The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
 Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
 Over the chained bay waters Liberty —

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
 As apparitional as sails that cross
 Some page of figures to be filed away ;
 — Till elevators drop us from our day . . .

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
 With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
 Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
 Foretold to other eyes on the same screen ;

And Thee, across the harbor, silver-paced
 As though the sun took step of thee, yet left
 Some motion ever unspent in thy stride, —
 Implicitly thy freedom staying thee !

Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft
 A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets,
 Tilting there momentarily, shrill shirt ballooning,
 A jest falls from the speechless caravan.

Down Wall, from girder into street noon leaks,
 A rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene ;
 All afternoon the cloud-flown derricks turn . . .
 Thy cables breathe the North Atlantic still.

And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,
 Thy guerdon . . . Accolade thou dost bestow
 Of anonymity time cannot raise :
 Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show.

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
 (How could mere toil align thy choiring strings !)
 Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,
 Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry, —

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
 Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,
 Beading thy path — condense eternity :
 And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.

Under thy shadow by the piers I waited ;
 Only in darkness is thy shadow clear.
 The City's fiery parcels all undone,
 Already snow submerges an iron year . . .

O Sleepless as the river under thee,
 Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
 Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
 And of the curveship lend a myth to God.

ATLANTIS

Through the bound cable strands, the arching path
 Upward, veering with light, the flight of strings, —
 Taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate
 The whispered rush, telepathy of wires.
 Up the index of night, granite and steel —
 Transparent meshes — fleckless the gleaming staves --
 Sibylline voices flicker, waveringly stream
 As though a god were issue of the strings. . . .

And through that cordage, threading with its call
 One arc synoptic of all tides below —
 Their labyrinthine mouths of history
 Pouring reply as though all ships at sea
 Complighted in one vibrant breath made cry, —
 "Make thy love sure — to weave whose song we ply!"

— From black embankments, moveless soundings hailed,
So seven oceans answer from their dream.

And on, obliquely up bright carrier bars
New octaves trestle the twin monoliths
Beyond whose frosted capes the moon bequeaths
Two worlds of sleep (O arching strands of song !) —
Onward and up the crystal-flooded aisle
White tempest nets file upward, upward ring
With silver terraces the humming spars,
The loft of vision, palladium helm of stars.

Sheerly the eyes, like seagulls stung with rime —
Slit and propelled by glistening fins of light —
Pick biting way up towering looms that press
Sidelong with flight of blade on tendon blade
— Tomorrows into yesteryear — and link
What cipher-script of time no traveller reads
But who, through smoking pyres of love and death,
Searches the timeless laugh of mythic spears.

Like hails, farewells — up planet-sequined heights
Some trillion whispering hammers glimmer Tyre :
Serenely, sharply up the long anvil cry
Of inchling æons silence rivets Troy.
And you, aloft there — Jason ! hesting Shout !
Still wrapping harness to the swarming air !
Silvery the rushing wake, surpassing call,
Beams yelling Æolus ! splintered in the straits !

From gulfs unfolding, terrible of drums,
Tall Vision-of-the-Voyage, tensely spare —
Bridge, lifting night to cycloramic crest
Of deepest day — O Choir translating time
Into what multitudinous Verb the suns
And synergy of waters ever fuse, recast
In myriad syllables, — Psalm of Cathay !
O Love, thy white, pervasive Paradigm . . . !

We left the haven hanging in the night —
Sheened harbor lanterns backward fled the keel.
Pacific here at time's end, bearing corn, —
Eyes stammer through the pangs of dust and steel.
And still the circular, indubitable frieze
Of heaven's meditation, yoking wave
To kneeling wave, one song devoutly binds —
The vernal strophe chimes from deathless strings !

O Thou steeled Cognizance whose leap commits
 The agile precincts of the lark's return ;
 Within whose lariat sweep encinctured sing
 In single chrysalis the many twain, —
 Of stars Thou art the stitch and stallion glow
 And like an organ, Thou, with sound of doom —
 Sight, sound and flesh Thou leadest from time's realm
 As love strikes clear direction for the helm.

Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth
 Whose fell unshadow is death's utter wound, —
 O River-throated — iridescently upborne
 Through the bright drench and fabric of our veins ;
 With white escarpments swinging into light,
 Sustained in tears the cities are endowed
 And justified conclamant with ripe fields
 Revolving through their harvests in sweet torment.

Forever Deity's glittering Pledge, O Thou
 Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns
 To wrapt inception and beatitude, —
 Always through blinding cables, to our joy,
 Of thy white seizure springs the prophecy :
 Always through spiring cordage, pyramids
 Of silver sequel, Deity's young name
 Kinetic of white choiring wings . . . ascends.

Migrations that must needs void memory,
 Inventions that cobblestone the heart, —
 Unspeakable Thou Bridge to Thee, O Love.
 Thy pardon for this history, whitest Flower,
 O Answer of all, — Anemone, —
 Now while thy petals spend the suns about us, hold —
 (O Thou whose radiance doth inherit me)
 Atlantis, — hold thy floating singer late !

So to thine Everpresence, beyond time,
 Like spears ensanguined of one tolling star
 That bleeds infinity — the orphic strings,
 Sidereal phalanxes, leap and converge :
 — One Song, one Bridge of Fire ! Is it Cathay,
 Now pity steepes the grass and rainbows ring
 The serpent with the eagle in the leaves . . . ?
 Whispers antiphonal in azure swing.

Merrill Moore

[1903-]

]

HOW SHE RESOLVED TO ACT

"I shall be careful to say nothing at all
 About myself or what I know of him
 Or the vaguest thought I have — no matter how dim,
 Tonight if it so happen that he call."

And not ten minutes later the door-bell rang
 And into the hall he stepped as he always did
 With a face and a bearing that quite poorly hid
 His brain that burned and his heart that fairly sang

And his tongue that wanted to be rid of the truth.
 As well as she could, for she was very loath
 To signify how she felt, she kept very still,
 But soon her heart cracked loud as a coffee mill
 And her brain swung like a comet in the dark
 And her tongue raced like a squirrel in the park.

OLD MEN

Talking about men who are richer than they are
 And telling how things that are might be otherwise
 And looking out of the corners of their eyes
 Are what old men inordinately like to do,

Men not so old that they have lost all care
 For matters they used to pride themselves about
 But certainly long since past the finding out
 Of whether these matters were or were not true.

And there are some old men who are scrupulously clean
 And some who have kept a fragment of the days
 That were broken when Time crashed their shelf to the ground,

These old men are neither fat nor lean,
 Nor short nor tall ; they are distinguishable by the ways
 They light their pipes and suddenly turn around.

MR. AND MRS. ALONZO SIDNEY

People of that sort seem to attract each other
 About as cattle manage to find the clover
 That only grows sparsely in a pasture field
 And miss the rich black spots of earth that yield
 Always the greenest and most luscious grass.

No one can say just how it comes to pass
 Any more than one might try to explain how it happens
 That breaks occur in fences where gold grain ripens.

They pass each other one day in the street
 Without introduction, without fore-knowledge at all
 Or they may see each other at a ball
 And chance to inquire and the next day they meet.

Then the game begins that takes the rest of their life;
 Man and woman, parents, husband and wife.

LUCKY STRIKE

Those who have no agent paid to cry
 Their story loudly in the public ear,
 To write their names in smoke across the sky
 And advertise their moan, applaud their tear
 And dwell upon their nature's worthiness
 Are fortunate in this:

it seems that they
 Are let to live a little longer than
 The uppermost, who are uppermost for a day
 But then they see a long descent begin
 That terminates in a mystic dismalness
 Where old forgotten songs are half-way heard

 And unused clothes, bought for children who died,
 Lie rumpled on a cold eternal floor
 That women sweep, who never swept before.

SHOT WHO? JIM LANE!

When he was shot he toppled to the ground
 As if the toughened posts that were his thighs
 Had felt that all that held them up were lies,

Weak lies, that suddenly someone had found
 Out all that was true about them.

It did not seem
 Like the crashing of a stalwart forest oak
 But like a frail staff that a sharp wind broke
 Or something insubstantial in a dream.

I never thought Jim Lane would fall like that.

He 'd sworn that bullets must be gold to find him;
 That when they came toward him he made them mind him

By means he knew,
just as a barn-yard cat
Can keep a pack of leaping dogs at bay
By concentrating and looking a certain way.

THE FLIES

Death came to him so quickly that the flies
In the room were unaware that he was dead,
Which is usually not the case.

They avoided his head
Strangely enough and did not light on his eyes
At all as flies are very apt to do
When the blood stops to rest and the brittle ribs stop heaving
And the heat goes off while the last breath is leaving
And the work of the lungs and the brain is finally through.

They continued describing circles in the air
Using the light globe to describe a radius,

But toward dusk this must have become tedious
To them, judging from the deliberate care
With which they took it on themselves to stop
And rest for the night over the mantel-top.

WHY HE STROKED THE CATS

He stroked the cats on account of a specific cause,
Namely, when he entered the house he felt
That the floor might split and the four walls suddenly melt
In strict accord with certain magic laws
That, it seemed, the carving over the front door meant,
Laws violated when men like himself stepped in,

But he had nothing to lose and nothing to win,
So in he always stepped. Before him went
Always his shadow. The sun was at his back.

The ceilings were high and the passageway was so black
That he welcomed the great cats who advanced to meet him,
The two of them arching their soft high backs to greet him;

He would kneel and stroke them gently under their jaws,
All that is mentioned above being the cause.

POET

Why do you, whenever you are addressed,
Dash your brains out, sir, all over the floor?
Against the wall or against an open door
As if you suddenly felt that you were pressed
By impolite circumstance to act that way?

Are you not aware that if you were dead
Hordes of swallows would still fly overhead
Twittering while they blackened the unfortunate day
That you have not yet decided may have to occur
Without your intervention while you dream
In blackened garden where white peacocks scream
And you are dust that cannot interfere
With others, who perhaps like you will insist on crushing
Their fragile skulls out of which their brains come rushing?

FIRE

Call the fire engines out! Turn the hydrants on!
Unhook the chemical carts! Let the water run!

Because a heart is burning in that house
Though it is as quiet as a mouse
And though the blinds are all drawn tightly shut.

Do not ponder now that the cause is what
You think the cause to be, but scream alarm
So that he can hear it whose hand and arm
Set fire to the heart that burns within!

He who has no cognizance of his sin
And will only greet with apathetic stare
The earth and sea and sky, the land and air,
And watch a butterfly glitter as it flits
About in the gutter where everybody spits.

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

ADAMS, LÉONIE PAGE 620

Born in Brooklyn, New York, December 9, 1899. Her poem, "April Mortality," appeared in the *New Republic* while she was a student at Barnard College, but she published no volume until "Those Not Elect" (1925). Her second volume, "High Falcon," appeared in 1929. She has spent her life in or about New York, with the exception of the two years 1928-1930 when she lived abroad on a fellowship granted her by the Guggenheim Foundation.

AIKEN, CONRAD PAGE 550

Born at Savannah, Georgia, August 5, 1889. He graduated from Harvard in 1911, travelled for three years, lived in Massachusetts until 1921, and lived in England between 1921 and 1928. He has published one volume of literary criticism, "Scepticisms" (1919); three volumes of prose fiction, "Bring! Bring!" (1925), "Blue Voyage" (1927), and "Costumes by Eros" (1928); and two American anthologies. But the bulk of his work has been done in verse, eight volumes of which were represented in his "Selected Poems" (1929). Since then he has published three more volumes: "John Deth and Other Poems" (1930), "The Coming Forth by Day of Osiris Jones" (1931), and "Preludes to Memnon" (1931). He has been made the central subject of a work on modern poetry, "The Melody of Chaos," by Houston Peterson (1931).

BARLOW, JOEL PAGE 25

Born at Redding, Connecticut, March 24, 1754; died at Zarnowiec, Poland, December 24, 1812. Educated at Dartmouth and Yale, he served as chaplain in the American army during the Revolution and afterwards practiced law in Hartford, where he founded a newspaper and became known as one of the "Hartford Wits" who collaborated in writing "The Anarchiad," a political satire (1786-1787). His epic poem, "The Vision of Columbus" (1787), was later expanded into "The Columbiad" (1807). Between 1788 and 1805 he lived in England and France, where his business connections made him rich and where he defended the liberal cause both in prose and in verse. At Chambéry in France he wrote "The Hasty Pudding" (1796) upon being unexpectedly supplied with this dish at an inn, and dedicated the poem to Mrs. Washington. Returning to Europe

in 1811 as minister to France, he went to meet Napoleon in Poland, but became ill there and died.

BENÉT, STEPHEN VINCENT PAGE 615

Born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, July 22, 1898. He published his first volume, "Five Men and Pompey," at seventeen, and a second, "Young Adventure," at twenty. Graduating from Yale in 1919, he published "Heavens and Earth" the next year and "Tiger Joy," containing the two ballads by which he is represented in this anthology, in 1925. His epic of the Civil War, "John Brown's Body," won him a wide reputation in 1928. "Ballads and Poems: 1915-1930" (1931) is a collection of his shorter pieces. He has also written several novels.

BENÉT, WILLIAM ROSE PAGE 512

Born in Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor, February 2, 1886. Since his graduation from Yale in 1907 he has served on the staffs of four magazines, among them the *Century* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and has been editor for a publishing house. He married Elinor Wylie in 1923. "Man Possessed" (1927) was a collection of the best poems which had appeared in six volumes published between 1913 and 1920.

BODENHEIM, MAXWELL PAGE 577

Born at Natchez, Mississippi, May 26, 1892. After three years in the United States Army he studied at Chicago, and for several years wrote poetry without achieving recognition. In twelve subsequent years he published seven volumes of verse: "Minna and Myself" (1918), "Advice" (1920), "Introducing Irony" (1922), "Against This Age" (1923), "The Sardonic Arm" (1923), "The King of Spain and other Poems" (1928), and "Bringing Jazz" (1930). He has also written a number of novels.

BOGAN, LOUISE PAGE 609

Born at Livermore Falls, Maine, August 11, 1897. Educated at the Girls' Latin School in Boston, she has spent her life as author in New York, where she has published two volumes of poetry, "Body of This Death" (1923) and "Dark Summer" (1929).

BOKER, GEORGE HENRY PAGE 292

Born in Philadelphia, October 6, 1823; died there, January 2, 1890. Educated at Princeton, he spent all of his life, except for three periods abroad, in his native city, where he was best known as a playwright. His two volumes of "Plays and Poems" (1856) contain "Calaynos" and "Francesca da Rimini," his most successful

metrical dramas, and a variety of shorter poems, notably the love sonnets which were discovered recently to have been only the earliest of a long series written to three women between 1851 and 1887. The rest of the series was published in "Sonnets" (1929). He wrote patriotic lyrics during the Civil War; and in 1882, in "The Book of the Dead," he defended the memory of his father against the aspersions of certain financial enemies. He was minister to Turkey from 1871 to 1875, and minister to Russia from 1875 to 1879.

BRADSTREET, ANNE PAGE 3

Born probably at Northampton, England, 1612; died in Boston, September 16, 1672. She came to Massachusetts with her husband, the future governor Simon Bradstreet, in 1630, as a member of the party under Winthrop. Her poems, written in Massachusetts, were first published in London (1650) under the title "The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung up in America." A second edition appeared in Boston six years after her death. They were reprinted in 1867 and in 1897.

BRANCH, ANNA HEMPSTEAD PAGE 407

Born at New London, Connecticut, in 1875. She graduated from Smith College in 1897 and has spent most of her life as a settlement worker in New York. She has published "The Heart of the Road and Other Poems" (1901), "The Shoes That Danced and Other Poems" (1905), and "Rose of the Wind and Other Poems" (1910).

BRYANT, WILLIAM CULLEN PAGE 35

Born at Cummington, Massachusetts, November 3, 1794; died in New York, June 12, 1878. He could read at four; was writing verse at eight; and became the author of "Thanatopsis" at sixteen or seventeen. His education was acquired at Williams College, but more particularly through a study of law, which he practiced for nine years in Massachusetts. In 1821 he published his first small volume of "Poems," which enjoyed so slight a success that, having become weary of the law, he turned to a career not of poetry but of journalism. He went to New York in 1825 and became associate editor of the *New York Review and Athenaeum Magazine*. In 1826 he was made assistant editor of the *New York Evening Post*; three years later he became its editor-in-chief; and he devoted the entire remainder of his long life to this important newspaper. His poetry, new collections of which were published in 1831, 1834, 1836, 1842, 1844, and 1854, was written whenever leisure for it offered, and was considered, as it still is, the first distinguished poetry produced in America during its century. After his wife died in 1866 he gave himself for several years to a translation of Homer into blank verse. He continued his editorial labors until the last year of his life.

CHIVERS, THOMAS HOLLEY PAGE 199

Born near Washington, Georgia, October 18, 1809; died at Decatur, Georgia, December 19, 1858. Brought up in good circumstances, he suffered before he was twenty from an unfortunate marriage. Educated in medicine at Transylvania University, Kentucky, he preferred to devote his days to poetry, which he did with a tragic lack of recognition for any but the most grotesque aspects of his work. He published eleven volumes which were either ignored or ridiculed, and one of which, "Eonchs of Ruby" (1851), was attacked as a plagiarism of Poe. They are: "The Path of Sorrow" (1832), "Conrad and Eudora" (1834), "Nacoochee, or the Beautiful Star" (1837), "The Lost Pleiad" (1845), "Search after Truth" (1848), "Eonchs of Ruby" (1851), "Memoralia" (1853), "Virginalia" (1853), "Atlanta" (1853), "Birth-day Song of Liberty" (1856), and "The Sons of Usna" (1858). He lost four of seven children by his second wife within a year, and many of his poems are laments for these; Avalon is a lament for his son Eugene Percy. There has been a long controversy concerning the relation of his poetry to Poe's, which he admired; the opinion now seems to be that, although undoubtedly influenced by Poe, he had natural tendencies in the same direction. He experimented recklessly with meters and phrases, was hypnotized by his own melody, and wrote in general with an utter disregard of discipline or taste. "Thomas Holley Chivers, Friend of Poe," by S. Foster Damon (1930), contains both biography and criticism, and traces his influence upon the English poets Swinburne and Rossetti.

CRANE, HART PAGE 636

Born at Garrettsville, Ohio, in 1899; died at sea April 27, 1932. After an education in the public schools of Ohio he wrote advertising copy in Cleveland and New York, and contributed poems to the radical literary magazines. His first volume was "White Buildings" (1926), with an introduction by Allen Tate. His second was "The Bridge" (1930), from which the last two selections in this anthology are the Proem and conclusion.

CRANE, STEPHEN PAGE 391

Born at Newark, New Jersey, November 1, 1871; died at Badenweiler, Germany, June 5, 1900. After a term in Lafayette College, Pennsylvania, he entered newspaper work and remained in it until his early death. His novel "The Red Badge of Courage" made him famous in 1895, and is still his best-known book, though he had published nine others before his death. He is one of the important names in American fiction. His works were collected in twelve volumes in 1925-1926, the poems bearing an introduction by Amy

Lowell. A complete edition of them appeared in 1930. They had originally appeared in two small volumes, "The Black Riders" (1895) and "War Is Kind" (1899). They attracted little attention at the time, being anticipations of the experimental verse which flourished in the second decade after his death. He spent the end of his life in England, where he was the friend of Joseph Conrad and Henry James.

CUMMINGS, E. E. (EDWARD ESTLIN) . . . PAGE 602

Born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 14, 1894. He lives in New York. He is a painter; he is the author of a celebrated novel dealing with the World War, "The Enormous Room" (1922); and his play "Him" was performed in New York in 1927. His first volume of poems was "Tulips and Chimneys" (1923). This has been followed by "XLI Poems" (1925), "&" (1925), "is 5" (1926), and "Viva" (1931).

DICKINSON, EMILY PAGE 309

Born at Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830; died there May 16, 1886. She spent most of her life in her father's house, though at seventeen she entered the South Hadley Female Seminary and in 1853-1854 visited Washington and Philadelphia, where it is possible, though by no means certain, that she fell in love with someone whom she was unable or unwilling to marry. She lived more than half of her days as a virtual recluse, writing curious, brilliant letters to her friends and composing a great many poems which she asked her sister Lavinia to burn after her death. The request was ignored, and three volumes of them were published between 1890 and 1896, the editors being her friend and neighbor Mabel Loomis Todd and her old correspondent Thomas Wentworth Higginson. In 1914 a fourth volume, "The Single Hound," was published by her niece Martha Dickinson Bianchi, who followed it in 1924 with "The Life and Letters" and "The Complete Poems" and in 1929 with "Further Poems." Two separate collections of her letters have been published, in 1894 and in 1931.

ELIOT, T. S. (THOMAS STEARNS) PAGE 532

Born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He studied at Harvard, the Sorbonne, and Oxford, and has lived since 1914 in England, where he is now editor of *The Criterion* and where he is highly influential as a literary critic. He has published four volumes of critical prose, "The Sacred Wood" (1921), "Homage to John Dryden" (1924), "For Lancelot Andrewes" (1929), and "Dante" (1930), and has written many important articles and introductions to edited works. His first book of poems was "Pruferock," published in London in

1917. "Poems" (1920) and "The Waste Land" (1922) received wide attention, mostly hostile; but the appearance in 1925 of "Poems: 1909-1925" confirmed the opinion that he was perfectly representative of a generation and a tradition "Ash Wednesday" was published in 1930.

EMERSON, RALPH WALDO PAGE 65

Born in Boston, May 25, 1803; died at Concord, Massachusetts, April 27, 1882. He was educated at Harvard, studied divinity there, and commenced the career of preacher which most of his American ancestors had followed, but separated from his church in 1832 to pursue a life of lecturing and writing. He lived after 1834 in Concord, which he left periodically for lecture tours or for visits to Europe, where he saw Carlyle and numerous other famous men of letters. His "Essays" in 1841 and 1844 gave him an international reputation which "Representative Men" and other volumes of prose increased through the next forty years. He published two volumes of poetry, "Poems" (1846) and "May Day and Other Pieces" (1867), which have steadily grown in reputation. Complete editions of his poetry appeared in 1883 and 1904.

FLETCHER, JOHN GOULD PAGE 487

Born at Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. Educated at Harvard, he joined the group of poets in Boston known as the Imagists, and after a few years went to England, where he has lived ever since. Before his connection with the Imagists he had published, in 1913, five small books of verse; in 1915 he published "Irradiations — Sand and Spray," and in the next year "Goblins and Pagodas." These have been followed by volumes in varying moods and styles: "The Tree of Life" (1918), "Breakers and Granite" (1921), "Parables" (1925), "Branches of Adam" (1926), and "The Black Rock" (1928). He has also been a critic and translator, and has written "The Two Frontiers" (1930), a comparison of Russia and America.

FRENEAU, PHILIP PAGE 13

Born in New York, January 2, 1752; died near Middletown Point, New Jersey, December 19, 1832. After his graduation from Princeton in 1771 he applied himself to poetry until the Revolution broke out, when for a while he wrote verse satires against the British but soon took a position as secretary to a planter in the West Indies. Returning to America while the Revolution was still on, he went to sea and was captured by the British, his treatment at whose hands he celebrated in "The British Prison-Ship, A Poem" (1781). After several years of journalism in New York he moved with the govern-

ment to Philadelphia and started there the *National Gazette*, where both in prose and in verse he championed the cause of Jefferson against Hamilton, often involving himself in bitter controversy and provoking Washington to call him "that rascal Freneau." He spent the latter years of his life on a farm in New Jersey. A voluminous poet who alternated between political satire and romantic lyrics about nature, he published collections of his verse in 1786, 1788, 1795, 1809, and 1815. A complete modern edition was issued in three volumes in 1902-1907.

FROST, ROBERT PAGE 413

Born in San Francisco, California, March 26, 1875. After the death of his father he was taken by his mother to New England, whence the family had originally come, and where he attended Dartmouth College for a few months. He wrote poetry for twenty years without recognition. He worked for a time in the mills at Lawrence, Massachusetts; he studied at Harvard between 1897 and 1899; he taught school, made shoes, edited a newspaper, and ran a New Hampshire farm. In 1912 he went with his family to England, where the publication in 1913 of "A Boy's Will," his first collection of poems, gave him recognition which grew into fame when "North of Boston" appeared the next year. Returning to America in 1915 a famous poet, he published "Mountain Interval" in 1916, "New Hampshire" in 1923, "West-Running Brook" in 1928, and his "Collected Poems" in 1930. He has lived on farms in Vermont and New Hampshire, has lectured, and has held for several years an informal professorship at Amherst College.

H. D. (HILDA DOOLITTLE) PAGE 501

Born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, September 10, 1886. Educated at Bryn Mawr College, she went abroad in 1911, where she has remained ever since, with the exception of a year in California. Since 1921 she has lived in Switzerland. In London she joined Ezra Pound and the other Imagists, and published her first volume, "Sea Garden," in 1916. This was followed by "Hymen" in 1921, "Heliodora and Other Poems" in 1924, "Collected Poems" in 1925, "Hippolytus Temporizes" in 1927, and "Red Roses for Bronze" in 1931. She has translated Greek poetry, with which her own work is frequently compared, and has published two novels, "Palimpsest" (1926) and "Hedylus" (1928).

HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL PAGE 207

Born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 29, 1809; died in Boston, October 7, 1894. He was a descendant of Anne Bradstreet. He was educated at Harvard and at the Medical School in

Boston, beginning his practice as a Boston doctor in 1836, after further studies abroad, and in the same year that he published his first volume of "Poems." He lectured on anatomy at Dartmouth and at Harvard, occupying the latter position between 1847 and 1882. In 1857 he was asked by James Russell Lowell to become a regular contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, where he published the essays which were later to be known under the titles "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," "The Professor at the Breakfast Table," "The Poet at the Breakfast Table," and "Over the Teacups." He also wrote novels and biographies and a number of important essays in medicine. Neither his prose nor his profession prevented him from keeping up his output of verse, much of which appeared in the pages of the "Autocrat" series. There was a second collection of it in 1846, and six other volumes were published between 1861 and 1888.

JEFFERS, ROBINSON PAGE 518

Born at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, January 10, 1887. He was taken to Europe many times during his boyhood, and at fifteen went with his family to California, where he graduated at eighteen from Occidental College in Los Angeles. Other years were spent at the University of Southern California, the University of Zürich, the Medical School in Los Angeles, and the University of Washington; "but with faint interest," he says. "I was n't deeply interested in anything but poetry." Married in 1913, he was starting for England in 1914 when the news of war turned him to Carmel, on the California coast, where he has remained more or less in seclusion with his family ever since. His first volume of poems, "Californians" (1916), attracted little attention and was not characteristic of his later work, which dates from "Tamar and Other Poems" (1924). This book made him immediately famous upon its being reviewed, after some delay, in the New York press; and when it was enlarged the next year into "Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems," his position was secure. He has followed it with "The Women at Point Sur" (1927), "Cawdor and Other Poems" (1928), "Dear Judas and Other Poems" (1929), "Descent to the Dead" (1931), and "Thurso's Landing and Other Poems" (1932).

LANIER, SIDNEY PAGE 321

Born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842; died at Lynn, North Carolina, September 7, 1881. Educated at Oglethorpe College, Georgia, he later studied and practiced law until literature and music, which equally attracted his devotion, diverted him to a life in the North which allowed him, through lecturing, teaching, and miscellaneous writing, the leisure to cultivate both arts. He played the flute in a Baltimore orchestra; he was a versatile and accom-

plished musician with a long line of musical ancestors behind him; and towards the end of his life he expounded his theory of the relation between music and poetry in "The Science of English Verse" and "Music and Poetry." He wrote books for boys, a novel, and a treatise on the English novel. His "Poems" were published in 1877; after his death his wife added to a new edition those pieces which had been written since 1877. He suffered all his life from tuberculosis contracted in the Civil War.

LEONARD, WILLIAM ELLERY PAGE 431

Born at Plainfield, New Jersey, January 25, 1876. He was educated at Harvard, Columbia, Gottingen, and Bonn, and is now professor of English literature at the University of Wisconsin, where he has taught since 1906. He has produced scholarly essays and has translated poetry from several languages, notably German, Latin, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon. His version of Lucretius is standard, as in less degree is that of Beowulf. He has published a number of volumes of short poems: "The Vaunt of Man" (1912), "The Lynching Bee and Other Poems" (1920), "Tutankhamen and After" (1924), and "A Son of Earth" (1929). His best known work in verse, however, is his narrative in sonnet form, "Two Lives" (1923-1925), whose conclusion is abridged for this anthology. It is an account of his marriage and of the death of his wife, with emphasis upon the significance of this death for his own mind. "The Locomotive God" (1927) deals with the same theme in terms of psychological analysis.

LINDSAY, VACHEL PAGE 452

Born at Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879; died there, December 5, 1931. He was educated at Hiram College, Illinois, the Art Institute, Chicago, and the New York School of Art. He tramped the country in all directions preaching a "gospel of beauty" and urging a communal, popular art; he made his way as he went along by exchanging poems for food and lodging. His influence did not begin to be considerable, however, until 1913, when he published "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," and 1914, when he was still more successful with "The Congo and Other Poems." He became a famous American figure by his recitals of "The Congo" and other pieces on many platforms, and was identified as long as he lived with the element of rag-time which, along with other popular rhythms, he brought into poetry. After "The Chinese Nightingale" (1917), however, his books failed to add anything to his reputation. His "Collected Poems" were published in 1923. His two prose volumes, "A Handy Guide for Beggars" (1916) and "Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty" (1914), explain the attitude behind his poetry.

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH . . . PAGE 117

Born at Portland, Maine, February 27, 1807; died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 24, 1882. He graduated from Bowdoin College, Maine, in Hawthorne's class, with literary ambitions, but his father preferred that he should study law. After an attempt at this he accepted an offer from Bowdoin College to establish him there in a professorship of modern languages on condition that he study in Europe as a preparation. He lived in Europe for three years, returning to teach in 1829, and transferring his chair from Bowdoin to Harvard in 1834. Beginning his work at Harvard in 1836, he continued it until 1854, when he resigned to devote himself more wholly to his poetry, which had already become well known through the publication of "Voices of the Night" (1839), "Ballads and Other Poems" (1841), "Poems on Slavery" (1842), "The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems" (1846), and "Evangeline" (1847). "Hiawatha" was published in 1855; "The Courtship of Miles Standish" in 1858; "Tales of the Wayside Inn" in 1863-1873; "New England Tragedies" in 1868; "The Divine Tragedy" in 1871; "Christus" in 1872; and his translation of Dante's "Divine Comedy" in 1867-70. His "Poets and Poetry of Europe" (1843) was a valuable anthology of translated verse.

LOWELL, AMY PAGE 399

Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, February 9, 1874; died there, May 12, 1925. Born into a distinguished family of which James Russell Lowell had been a member, she was educated chiefly by private tutors and by travel abroad. Determining in 1902 to become a poet, she studied the art for ten years before her first volume, "A Dome of Many-Colored Glass" (1912), was published. "Sword Blades and Poppy Seeds" (1914) was her first characteristic volume, and it attracted the kind of heated criticism, often hostile, with which her radical forms were always to be received thereafter. Later volumes were: "Men, Women, and Ghosts" (1916), "Can Grande's Castle" (1918), "Pictures of the Floating World" (1919), "Legends" (1921); and, after her death, "What's O'Clock" (1925), "East Wind" (1926), and "Ballads for Sale" (1927). In 1925 she published a two-volume biography of Keats, to whose poetry and life she was extraordinarily devoted. "A Critical Fable," published anonymously in 1922, is in the manner of James Russell Lowell's "A Fable for Critics." She assisted in the translation of a volume of Chinese poems, "Fir-Flower Tablets" (1921). And she wrote two volumes of criticism, "Six French Poets" (1915) and "Tendencies in Modern American Poetry" (1917).

LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL PAGE 249

Born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 22, 1819; died there, August 12, 1891. He was educated at Harvard, and in 1841 published "A Year's Life," his first volume of poetry. "Poems" appeared in 1844, the first of the "Biglow Papers" in 1846, more "Poems" in 1848, and "Poetical Works" in 1850. In 1855 he became professor of modern languages and literature at Harvard; from 1857 to 1861 he was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and from 1864 to 1869 of the *North American Review*; he was ambassador to Spain from 1877 to 1880 and to England from 1880 to 1885. He continued to write and publish poetry, and he became, through such volumes as "Among My Books" (1870) and "My Study Windows" (1871), an important literary critic.

MACLEISH, ARCHIBALD PAGE 581

Born at Glencoe, Illinois, May 7, 1892. He was educated at Yale and Harvard, practiced law in Boston, and subsequently gave up the law for literature, which he has cultivated alternately in the United States and in Europe. His volumes of poetry have been: "Tower of Ivory" (1917), "The Happy Marriage" (1924), "The Pot of Earth" (1925), "Nobodaddy" (1925), "Streets in the Moon" (1926), "The Hamlet of A. MacLeish" (1928), "New Found Land" (1931), and "Conquistador" (1932).

MILLAY, EDNA ST. VINCENT PAGE 574

Born at Rockland, Maine, February 22, 1892. She was educated at Vassar and lived for several years in New York, writing short stories and acting with the Provincetown Players, for whom she also wrote plays. She now lives at Austerlitz, New York. "Renaissance" (1917) and "A Few Figs from Thistles" (1920) gave her fame as a lyric poet, and this has been consolidated by "Second April" (1921), "The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems" (1924), "The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems" (1928), and the sonnet series "Fatal Interview" (1931). She wrote the libretto for Deems Taylor's opera "The King's Henchman" in 1927, and she is the author of three plays: "Two Slatterns and a King," "The Lamp and the Bell," and "Aria Da Capo."

MOODY, WILLIAM VAUGHN PAGE 347

Born at Spencer, Indiana, July 8, 1869; died at Colorado Springs, Colorado, October 17, 1910. He was educated at Harvard, and, beginning in 1895, taught English literature for eight years at the University of Chicago. He published "The Masque of Judgment" in 1900, and the next year his "Poems," which had the special interest of voicing a protest against those aspects of contemporary

society and government which struck him as painfully wrong. A dramatic trilogy in verse, to contain "The Fire-Bringer," "The Masque of Judgment," and "The Death of Eve," was never completed, though some of Pandora's songs from "The Fire-Bringer" have become perhaps his best known poems. He produced two prose plays, "The Great Divide" (1907) and "The Faith Healer" (1909), the first with great success. An edition of his poems and dramas was published in 1912, and a selection from the poems in 1931.

MOORE, MERRILL PAGE 644

Born at Columbia, Tennessee, September 11, 1903. He was educated at Vanderbilt University, receiving his M.D. in 1928. After serving as interne in Boston, he returned to Nashville, Tennessee, for a career in medicine. As a student he had been a member of The Fugitives, a group at Nashville which also included Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom. In 1929 he published a volume of informal sonnets, "The Noise that Time Makes," some of which had been written for The Fugitives.

PINKNEY, EDWARD COOTE PAGE 61

Born in London, England, October 1, 1802; died in Baltimore, April 11, 1828. He spent his youth in England, where his father was in the diplomatic service of the United States. At ten he entered St. Mary's College, Baltimore, and at fourteen entered the United States Navy, from which he resigned in 1824. During the remaining four years of his short life he practiced law in Baltimore and edited *The Marylander*. His one slight volume of "Poems" was published in 1825.

POE, EDGAR ALLAN PAGE 214

Born in Boston, January 19, 1809; died in Baltimore, October 7, 1849. His parents were actors who died when he was two years old, leaving him to be adopted in Richmond, Virginia, by Edgar Allan, who gave him his middle name. He was educated first in English schools, then in the schools of Richmond, and finally at the University of Virginia, which he left at the end of his first year, in 1827. Running away to Boston, he published there his first volume, "Tamerlane and Other Poems" (1827), and enlisted in the army as Edgar A. Perry. Returning to Richmond in 1829, and publishing there his second volume, "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems" (1829), he secured an appointment to West Point, holding it until he was dismissed in 1831, when he went to New York and published his third volume, "Poems" (1831). Then began, after a period which is still somewhat obscure, a painful life of wandering, of hack-work, of journalism, of fiction, and of poetry. Becoming famous

through his tales, two volumes of which appeared in 1840 and another in 1845 (the year of *The Raven*), he made his final collection of verse, "The Raven and Other Poems," also in 1845, and with it a permanent reputation.

POUND, EZRA PAGE 480

Born at Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and at Hamilton College, and for several years was a teacher of literature at the University of Pennsylvania and at Wabash College, Indiana. In 1908 he went to Italy, where at Venice he published "A Lume Spento" (1908). From that year until 1920 he lived in London; from 1920 to 1924 he was in Paris; and since 1924 he has lived in Rapallo, Italy. During his London period he made his reputation as a poet with "Personae" (1909), "Exultations" (1909), "Canzoni" (1911), "Ripostes" (1912), a translation of the sonnets of Guido Cavalcanti (1912), a translation and adaptation of some Chinese poems in "Cathay" (1915), and "Lustra" (1917). His poems were collected under the title "Personae" in 1926. For years he has been engaged upon a long work called "Cantos," only parts of which have appeared. It will be, when done, his major work.

PUTNAM, PHELPS PAGE 583

Born in Boston, in 1894. He was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and at Yale; and has lived at various times in Arizona, in Washington, in New York, and in Boston. His first volume, "Trinc" (1927), contained certain narrative poems about a hero named Bill who in his second volume, "The Five Seasons" (1931), became the central figure in a modern American "mythology" developed through a series of narratives and lyrics.

RANSOM, JOHN CROWE PAGE 541

Born at Pulaski, Tennessee, April 30, 1888. He was educated at Vanderbilt University and at Oxford, and has taught since 1914 at Vanderbilt. He was chief founder of the group there called The Fugitives. His first book was "Poems About God" (1919), his second was "Chills and Fever" (1924), and his third was "Two Gentlemen in Bonds" (1927).

REESE, LIZETTE WOODWORTH PAGE 341

Born at Waverly, Maryland, January 9, 1856. She taught English at the Western High School in Baltimore for many years, retiring in 1921. Her first book of lyrics, "A Branch of May," was published in 1887; it has been followed by "A Handful of Lavender" (1891),

"A Quiet Road" (1896), "A Wayside Lute" (1909), "Spicewood" (1920), "Wild Cherry" (1923), "Little Henrietta" (1927), and "White April" (1931). Her "Selected Poems" were published in 1926.

ROBINSON, EDWIN ARLINGTON . . . PAGE 358

Born at Head Tide, Maine, December 22, 1869. From 1891 to 1893 he was at Harvard, and in 1896 he published "The Torrent and the Night Before," enlarging it into "The Children of the Night" the following year. Five years later in New York he published "Captain Craig." Between this time and 1910 he worked as inspector on the New York subway and as a clerk in the New York Custom House. Since 1911 he has spent his summers at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and his winters in Boston and New York. In 1910 he published his third volume, "The Town Down the River," and in 1916 "The Man Against the Sky," which gained him his first wide reputation. The next year appeared "Merlin," the first of three long poems on Arthurian themes of which the other two are "Lancelot" (1920) and "Tristram" (1927). He has varied this program with a series of long narratives on contemporary themes: "Avon's Harvest" (1921), "Roman Bartholow" (1923), "The Man Who Died Twice" (1924), "Cavender's House" (1929), "The Glory of the Nightingales" (1930), and "Matthias at the Door" (1931). Other collections of short poems have been "The Three Taverns" (1920) and "Dionysus in Doubt" (1925). His "Collected Poems" were published in 1921, and have been re-issued a number of times with additions. His "Sonnets" were collected in 1928.

RORTY, JAMES PAGE 566

Born at Middletown, New York, March 30, 1890. He was educated at Tufts College, and spent several years in California as an advertising writer. Coming to New York with some verse satires on advertising to his credit, he nevertheless continued to work at his trade, varying it with contributions to radical journalism, until he bought a farm near Westport, Connecticut, and retired to it in 1931. His only volume is "Children of the Sun" (1926).

SANDBURG, CARL PAGE 444

Born at Galesburg, Illinois, January 6, 1878. His education, except for a few years in public school and at Lombard College, Illinois, has been acquired through the process of working as driver of a milk wagon, porter in a barber shop, scene-shifter, truck-driver, dishwasher, harvest hand, soldier, salesman, and newspaperman. His first volume to attract attention, "Chicago Poems" (1916), was

followed two years later by "Cornhuskers" (1918), and in 1920 by "Smoke and Steel." Between "Slabs of the Sunburnt West" (1923) and "Good Morning, America" (1928) he published the first two volumes of a life of Lincoln and a collection of native folksongs called "The American Songbag" (1927). A volume of "Selected Poems," edited by Rebecca West, appeared in 1926. For years he has been on the staff of the Chicago *Daily News*.

SANTAYANA, GEORGE PAGE 344

Born in Madrid, Spain, December 16, 1863. He was educated at Harvard, where he taught philosophy from 1889 until 1912, and where he began the long series of philosophical works which are his chief distinction. Since 1914 he has lived in Europe "Sonnets and Poems" was published in 1894, and the sonnets have remained American classics since that day, keeping an audience which has not been so faithful to "A Hermit of Carmel," "The Knight's Return," and the longer "Lucifer." His own selection from his "Poems" was published with an interesting preface in 1923.

STERLING, GEORGE PAGE 352

Born at Sag Harbor, New York, December 1, 1869; died at San Francisco, California, in 1926. His literary life was spent in California, where before the rise of Robinson Jeffers, whom he was among the first to recognize, he was generally considered and called the laureate of the region. "The Testimony of the Suns" (1903), "A Wine of Wizardry" (1908), "The House of Orchids and Other Poems" (1911), were followed by "Beyond the Breakers," "The Caged Eagle," and other collections, and by three dramatic poems, "Lilith," "Rosamund," and "Truth." His "Selected Poems" were published in 1923.

STEVENS, WALLACE PAGE 465

Born in Pennsylvania in 1879. He was educated at Harvard, and now lives at Hartford, Connecticut, where he maintains a strict reticence concerning himself. His only volume is "Harmonium" (1923), reissued with additions in 1931.

STICKNEY, TRUMBULL PAGE 393

Born at Geneva, Switzerland, June 20, 1874; died in Boston, October 11, 1904. After graduating from Harvard in 1895 he studied classical literature in France for seven years and returned to teach Greek at Harvard in 1903. He died the next year of a tumor on the brain, leaving his manuscripts to his friends, among whom was William Vaughn Moody, for posthumous publication ("Poems,"

1905). An earlier volume, "Dramatic Verses," had appeared in 1902.

TATE, ALLEN PAGE 627

Born in Fairfax County, Virginia, November 19, 1899. Brought up in Kentucky and Tennessee, he was educated at Vanderbilt University, where he helped found the group known as The Fugitives. He spent several years in New York as a writer of critical articles for the literary journals and, latterly, as a biographer of Stonewall Jackson (1928) and Jefferson Davis (1929). A third biography, with Robert E. Lee as its subject, has been written in a house on the Cumberland River near Clarksville, Tennessee, where he went to live in 1930 after two years in France. "Mr. Pope and Other Poems" appeared in 1928, and "Poems" in 1932.

TEASDALE, SARA PAGE 477

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, August 8, 1884. After an education in St. Louis and a period of travel abroad she settled in New York "Sonnets to Duse" (1907) was her first volume, followed four years later by "Helen of Troy and Other Poems." She is best known for the brief lyrics to be found in "Rivers to the Sea" (1915), "Love Songs" (1917), "Flame and Shadow" (1920), and "Dark of the Moon" (1926).

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID PAGE 234

Born at Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817; died there, May 6, 1862. He graduated from Harvard in 1837, spending the rest of his life in his native town, where for his living he made pencils, taught school, surveyed, and farmed, and where for his pleasure he tramped the woods and fields and wrote endlessly in his "Journal," which, when published in 1906, ran into fourteen volumes. He was eccentric and solitary; in 1845 he retired from Concord to spend two years in a cabin he had built with his own hands on the shore of Walden Pond. In 1849 he published "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," and in 1854 the book by which he is everywhere known, "Walden." After his death the articles which he had contributed to various magazines were collected into a number of volumes, and in 1895 a collection of his verse was published under the title "Poems of Nature." His works were published in eleven volumes in 1894 and in twenty volumes in 1906.

TIMROD, HENRY PAGE 302

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1829; died in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1867. He was educated at the University of Georgia, and became tutor in a South Carolina family. He pub-

lished his first volume of "Poems" in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, during which he served as correspondent for Southern papers. In 1873 a new collection of his "Poems" was published, and this included the war pieces which are printed in the present anthology. The book was reissued in 1874 and again in 1899.

VAN DOREN, MARK PAGE 592

Born at Hope, Illinois, June 13, 1894. He was educated at the University of Illinois and at Columbia University, where he has taught English and American literature since 1920. He was literary editor of *The Nation* from 1924 to 1928. He has published studies of two poets, Dryden (1920) and Edwin Arlington Robinson (1927), and has edited "An Anthology of World Poetry" (1928) and "An Autobiography of America" (1929). He has published four volumes of verse "Spring Thunder and Other Poems" (1924), "7 P.M. and Other Poems" (1926), "Now the Sky and Other Poems" (1928), and "Jonathan Gentry" (1931).

WHITMAN, WALT PAGE 257

Born at West Hills, near Huntington, Long Island, New York, May 31, 1819; died at Camden, New Jersey, March 26, 1892. He had little schooling; at twelve he was a printer's devil in Brooklyn, and within a few years he was a practicing printer and newspaperman. He made his living in this way, on a number of journals in New York or Brooklyn, until the Civil War. In 1848 he went to New Orleans to write for the daily *Crescent*, returning to New York by way of Chicago. In 1855 he published "Leaves of Grass" with little success beyond a complimentary letter from Emerson; a second edition the next year attracted more attention; but it was not until the third edition in 1860 that he became widely discussed as in more than one way an unconventional poet. During the Civil War he nursed wounded soldiers, and in 1864, his health failing, secured a clerkship in the Department of the Interior at Washington. Dismissed from this position the next year, he secured another in the attorney-general's office; but in 1873 he was attacked by paralysis and retired to Camden, where he lived until his death. In 1865 he had published "Walt Whitman's Drum-Taps," and he continued thereafter to bring out new, enlarged editions of "Leaves of Grass" against violent critical opposition which more and more, however, was balanced by the extravagant praise of his admirers. The final edition was prepared on his death bed. His prose works, "Democratic Vistas" (1871) and "Specimen Days and Collect" (1882-1883), were collected in 1888 and in 1892. His "Complete Writings" were published in ten volumes in 1902. Collections have recently been published of the prose and verse which he wrote before "Leaves

of Grass." They show him to have been at that time a commonplace poet and journalist.

WHITTIER, JOHN GREENLEAF . . . PAGE 150

Born at East Haverhill, Massachusetts, December 17, 1807; died at Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, September 7, 1892. Brought up in a poor family of Quakers, he had little schooling and few books, though the Bible, the writings of Quakers, and the poems of Burns were eagerly read by him in his boyhood. An early poem attracted the attention of William Lloyd Garrison, who took him into his family and made it possible for him to attend the Haverhill Academy. His subsequent life was spent in writing both prose and verse for many newspapers and magazines, and in agitating with his pen the cause of abolition, with which his name has always been identified. His first notable appearance as a poet was with "Mogg Megone" in 1836; the more important of his numerous subsequent collections were "Poems" (1838), "Lays of My Home and Other Poems" (1843), "Voices of Freedom" (1846), "Songs of Labor" (1850), "The Chapel of the Hermits" (1853), "Home Ballads and Poems" (1860), "In War Time" (1864), "Snow-Bound" (1866), "The Tent on the Beach" (1867), "Maud Muller" (1867), "Among the Hills" (1869), "Miriam" (1871), "The King's Missive" (1881), and "The Bay of Seven Islands" (1883). His complete writings were published in seven volumes in 1888-1889, and there have been many collected editions of the poems.

WILLIAMS, WILLIAM CARLOS . . . PAGE 471

Born at Rutherford, New Jersey, September 17, 1883. He graduated in medicine from the University of Pennsylvania in 1906, and is now a practicing physician in Rutherford. He has published "Poems" (1909), "The Tempers" (1913), "Al Que Quiere" (1917), "Kora in Hell" (1921), "Sour Grapes" (1922), and "Spring and All" (1923). He is also the author of three works in prose, "The Great American Novel" (1923), "In the American Grain" (1925), and "A Voyage to Pagany" (1928).

WOODBERRY, GEORGE EDWARD . . . PAGE 325

Born at Beverly, Massachusetts, May 12, 1855; died there January 2, 1930. He graduated from Harvard in 1877 and taught English literature at the University of Nebraska until 1882; then he returned to Beverly and was occupied with his writing until 1891, when he was appointed professor of English at Columbia University. After thirteen years during which he exerted great influence as a teacher he resigned from Columbia in 1904 and spent his last quarter-century where he had spent his first. His numerous critical

essays, dealing with a wide range of literary subjects, were collected in six volumes in 1920-1921. He wrote books on Poe, Hawthorne, and Emerson, and as contributor to the *Nation* for several years he discussed current books. The first volume of his poems was "The North Shore Watch and Other Poems" (1890), followed ten years later by "Wild Eden." After "Poems" (1903) and "The Flight" (1914) he published in 1917 the sonnet sequence which is reprinted in the present anthology and which characterizes him best. "The Roamer," another extended effort, appeared in 1919.

WYLIE, ELINOR PAGE 528

Born in Somerville, New Jersey, in 1887; died in New York, December 16, 1928. She spent her girlhood in Washington, D.C., and after a period of travel and residence in Europe returned to New York where her literary career began. Her reputation as a poet was made with "Nets to Catch the Wind" (1921), which was followed in 1923 by "Black Armour." During the next five years she published four novels, "Jennifer Lorn" (1923), "The Venetian Glass Nephew" (1925), "The Orphan Angel" (1926), and "Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard" (1928). In 1928 her third volume of poetry, "Trivial Breath," appeared; and after her death was published "Angels and Earthly Creatures" (1928). Her poems were collected in 1932. She married William Rose Benét in 1923.

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